

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE
ESPECIALLY AS WATERFOWL HABITAT

P R O C E E D I N G S
OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

Montreux, Switzerland
27 June to 4 July 1990

RAMSAR CONVENTION BUREAU
Avenue du Mont-Blanc
1196 Gland, Switzerland
1990

FOREWORD

The Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, 1971) was hosted by Switzerland and held in Montreux from 27 June to 4 July 1990, in accordance with the provisions of Article 6 of the Convention. Fifty-six of the fifty-nine States then Party to the Convention participated in the Fourth Meeting of the Conference. In addition, twenty-three non-Party States, as well as sixty governmental and non-governmental national and international organizations participated in the Conference as observers.

The Proceedings of the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties are presented in three volumes, with versions in English and French. The first volume includes the summary reports of the Plenary Sessions and of the Workshops, the report of the Credentials Committee, the Resolutions and Recommendations adopted by the Conference of the Contracting Parties, the list of participants and some of the Conference Documents. The second document will be devoted to the Conference Workshops. In addition to the Workshop reports, it will contain the relevant overview papers (documents DOC. C.4.7 to DOC. C.4.11) and information documents. The third volume will contain the National Reports and related Conference Documents DOC. C.4.6 and C.4.18. Pursuant to the instructions of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, the Conference Papers have been revised by the Bureau after the meeting, in order to take into account the amendments adopted in the Plenary Sessions and to correct minor errors or discrepancies between the English and French texts.

In these Proceedings, States are designated in accordance with a list provided by the United Nations Secretariat as at the time when the original documents were prepared. The designation employed and the presentation of the material in these Proceedings do not imply the expression of any opinion by the Bureau concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delineation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The Ramsar Bureau would like to express its appreciation to the Governments of

Switzerland,
The Canton of Vaud, and
The Town of Montreux,

for hosting the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties; and to the following institutions which supported the participation of a large number of delegates from developing countries:

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA),
Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA),
Federal Office of Environment, Forests and Landscape (Switzerland),
Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety
(Federal Republic of Germany),
Mekong Secretariat,
Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Netherlands),
Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Sweden),
Royal Norwegian Ministry for Development Cooperation,
The Nature Conservancy (United States),
The World Conservation Union (IUCN)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco),
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP),
United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and
World Wide Fund for Nature/World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

The Ramsar Convention Bureau and the organizations which provided financial assistance have waived copyright.
ISBN 2-8317-0024-8

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

First Session: 27 June 1990, 09h00 - 12h00

Chairman: Mr P. Goeldlin

Secretariat: Mr D. Navid (Secretary General)
Mr M. Smart (Conservation Coordinator)

Rapporteurs: Mr P. Galland
Mr T.A. Jones

Agenda item I: Opening of the Meeting

The Secretary General introduced Professor Pierre Goeldlin, Director of the Zoological Museum of Lausanne and Professor at the University of Lausanne, nominated by the delegation of Switzerland as provisional Chairman.

The provisional Chairman opened the meeting and after welcoming the participants to Switzerland and especially to the town of Montreux, located, appropriately, on the shores of the Lake of Geneva, he introduced representatives of the three levels of Swiss government: the Confederation, the Canton of Vaud, and the city of Montreux.

Agenda item II: Welcoming Statements

At the invitation of the provisional Chairman, Ambassador J.-P. Keusch, head of the Swiss delegation, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Swiss Confederation. He emphasized the fragility of wetland habitats which had long been a source of fascination to people and also subject to intensive use. He drew particular attention to the importance of wetlands as centres of biological diversity (especially with regard to migratory species) and to the problems of global climatic change. In conclusion he emphasized the importance which Switzerland attached to wetland conservation and expressed the hope that participants would take the opportunity to visit some Swiss wetlands during the course of their stay in Montreux (see Annex 2).

The provisional Chairman then explained that Mr F. Cotti, the Swiss Minister of Environment, had been unable to attend the meeting in person, but had sent a video message to the participants (see Annex 1).

Mr Cotti welcomed the participants, noting that Switzerland was honoured to host the Fourth Meeting of the Conference and emphasizing the importance which Switzerland placed on the Ramsar Convention. He considered that wetland conservation was a matter of great importance and urgency. He was pleased to announce the designation of six new Swiss Ramsar sites, including the southern shore of Lac de Neuchâtel and Les Granges on the Lake of Geneva, close to Montreux. The other four sites were Klingnauer Stausee, Kaltbrunner Riet, Geneva harbour and Rhone downstream of Geneva, and Stausee Niederried.

The provisional Chairman then introduced Mr M. Blanc, State Councillor, who welcomed participants on behalf of the Canton of Vaud. Mr Blanc emphasized the crucial role of the Cantons in nature conservation matters and drew attention to the legal measures and public support which ensured real protection for wetlands of all kinds. Although the wetlands of Switzerland were small in comparison with those found elsewhere in the world, the Canton of Vaud was proud to nominate two of the new Ramsar sites mentioned by Mr Cotti (see Annex 3).

The provisional Chairman thanked Mr Blanc and expressed his appreciation for the active involvement of the Canton of Vaud in implementing the Ramsar Convention in Switzerland. As a citizen of Montreux, the provisional Chairman was then delighted to introduce the Mayor, Mr F. Alt.

Recalling Montreux's long tradition as an international resort, Mr Alt welcomed the participants to the city and expressed the hope that they would find all the facilities which were needed for a fruitful conference in picturesque and comfortable surroundings. He noted that one of the Conference exhibits, specially prepared by local school children, demonstrated the concern of the people of Montreux for the lake and other nearby wetlands (see Annex 4).

At the invitation of the provisional Chairman, the Secretary General thanked the Swiss authorities for their words of welcome. He was extremely encouraged by the strong support

which the host country had given to the Convention and he was especially pleased that several new Ramsar sites had been designated for the List of wetlands of international importance. He then introduced the Ramsar video which had been produced recently by the Bureau as an instrument to promote publicity of the Convention. The video was available in both French and English language versions and copies were at the disposal of delegations for use in their own countries.

Following the showing of the video, the provisional Chairman introduced Mr B. von Droste, Director, Division of Ecological Sciences, Unesco, who addressed participants on behalf of the Convention depositary (see Annex 5).

Mr von Droste welcomed participants on behalf of the Director General of Unesco and extended his thanks to the Swiss authorities. He hoped that the number of Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention, which was relatively low in comparison with other international treaties, would continue to grow, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America. He emphasized areas of complementarity between the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention and Unesco's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme. He considered the "wise use" of wetlands to be particularly important and illustrated this point with a range of examples from around the world, where wetlands were facing unprecedented pressures. He emphasized the importance of communication not only with decision-makers, but also with the general public. In conclusion, he hoped that the Convention would forge partnerships at all levels; particularly by encouraging international banks and aid agencies to promote wetland conservation.

The provisional Chairman thanked Mr von Droste for his interesting contribution and asked him to convey the good wishes of the Conference to the Director General of Unesco.

Agenda item III: Adoption of the Agenda

The Conference adopted document DOC. C.4.1.: Draft Agenda without debate, and the associated document DOC. C.4.2, Annotated Agenda.

Agenda item IV: Adoption of Rules of Procedure

Referring to document DOC. C.4.3., the provisional Chairman noted that the Rules of Procedure had been drafted on the basis of those adopted by the Third Meeting of the Conference at Regina in 1987. The Standing Committee had reviewed DOC. C.4.3. and participants were invited to ask any questions which they might have had regarding the draft Rules. There being no intervention from the floor, the provisional Chairman offered document DOC. C.4.3. for adoption. The Conference adopted the Rules of Procedure without debate

Agenda item V: Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairmen

The delegation of Ghana proposed the provisional Chairman, Professor P. Goeldlin of the Swiss delegation for election as Chairman of the Fourth Meeting of the Conference. The delegation of Sweden seconded the proposal.

The delegation of Suriname proposed that one Vice-Chairman should be elected from the delegation of Canada. The delegation of India seconded the proposal.

The delegation of the USA proposed that the second Vice-Chairman should be elected from the delegation of Pakistan. The delegation of Senegal seconded the proposal.

The delegations of Canada and Pakistan indicated their willingness to stand for election for the posts of Vice-Chairmen. The delegation of Canada nominated Mr H.A. Clarke and the delegation of Pakistan nominated Mr A.L. Rao.

The Conference by consensus elected Professor P. Goeldlin as Chairman of the Fourth Meeting of the Conference and Mr H.A. Clarke and Mr A.L. Rao as Vice-Chairmen of the Fourth Meeting of the Conference.

Agenda item VI: Appointment of Credentials and other Committees

Pursuant to Rule 3(3) of the Rules of Procedure, the Chairman invited proposals for appointment to a Credentials Committee consisting of five delegates.

The delegation of the Netherlands proposed a member of the delegation of Ghana for appointment to the Credentials Committee. The delegation of Senegal seconded the proposal.

The delegation of Denmark proposed a member of the delegation of Egypt for appointment to the Credentials Committee. The delegation of Canada seconded the proposal.

The delegation of Poland proposed a member of the delegation of Belgium for appointment to the Credentials Committee. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran seconded the proposal.

The delegation of Chile proposed a member of the delegation of Venezuela for appointment to the Credentials Committee. The delegation of the United Kingdom seconded the proposal.

The delegation of the German Democratic Republic proposed a member of the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany for appointment to the Credentials Committee. The delegation of Hungary seconded the proposal.

The Conference appointed the Credentials Committee by consensus, consisting of members of the delegations of Belgium, Egypt, Federal Republic of Germany, Ghana, and Venezuela.

Agenda item VII: Admission of Observers

At the invitation of the Chairman, and pursuant to Rule 2 of the Rules of Procedure, the Secretary General noted that provision was made for participation in the Meeting of the Conference by international agencies or bodies, and national governmental and approved non-governmental agencies or bodies, provided the Contracting Parties present did not decide otherwise. He further pointed out that the annex to document DOC. C.4.16 listed bodies and agencies which had informed the Bureau of their desire to be represented at the Meeting by observers. This list had been reviewed by the Standing Committee, which recommended document DOC. C.4.16 for approval.

The Conference agreed by consensus the admission of these observers, who were then welcomed by the Chairman.

Agenda item VIII: Report of the Standing Committee

The Chairman invited the Chairman of the Standing Committee to present a brief report on the activities of the Standing Committee since its establishment at the Third Meeting of the Conference (Regina, Canada, 1987). The Chairman of the Standing Committee drew the attention of the Conference to the report of the Standing Committee, document DOC. C.4.4, which he proceeded to review.

He noted the broad spectrum of activities undertaken by the Standing Committee, and emphasized the Committee's role in reviewing arrangements for the present Conference. He expressed thanks to the governments of Canada, Costa Rica and Switzerland for their hospitality in hosting meetings of the Standing Committee during the last triennium; to the Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee and to the Chairmen of the Criteria and Wise Use Working Group and the Programme Sub-Group, for their help and support. He was also extremely appreciative for the continuing support of the Directors and staff of IUCN and IWRB and for the work undertaken by Bureau staff.

There being no questions forthcoming from the floor, the Chairman thanked the Standing Committee Chairman for his report, asked that it be noted for the record and introduced the next Agenda item.

Agenda item IX: Report of Convention Bureau

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary General presented a brief report on the developments under the Convention since the Third Meeting of the Conference (Regina, Canada, 1987). The Secretary General drew the attention of the Conference to the report of the Convention Bureau, document DOC. C.4.5, which he proceeded to review, highlighting recent developments since document DOC. C.4.5 had been prepared.

He was pleased to announce that up until this session 55 countries had now completed all the formalities for accession to the Convention (Chad, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Malta, Nepal, Niger, Uganda, Venezuela and Vietnam having acceded since the Third Meeting of the Conference in 1987), and 3 other countries (Bolivia, Guatemala and Panama), had deposited instruments of accession, but had not yet designated a site for the List of wetlands of international importance. Several observer delegations had indicated the intention of their governments to join the Convention in the near future.

Almost all Contracting Parties had now accepted the Paris Protocol, and although progress with acceptance of the Regina amendments had, understandably, been slower, some 9 Contracting Parties had now completed the necessary procedures. He urged other Contracting Parties to accept the Regina amendments as soon as possible.

The number of sites contained in the List of wetlands of international importance had grown very rapidly since the Third Meeting of the Conference (Regina, 1987) and it was likely that the five hundredth site would be added during the course of the present Meeting.

The Bureau was extremely appreciative of the guidance given by the Standing Committee, especially in the early years of the Bureau's existence.

The Secretary General emphasized the importance of partnerships with other organizations; as a very small service body, the Bureau was unable to undertake all of its duties alone. He paid particular tribute to the Bureau's principal partner organizations, namely IUCN and IWRB, who provided the Bureau with administrative services, technical expertise and outreach support from their respective networks. He also thanked both permanent and contract staff of the Ramsar Bureau for their efforts in preparing the present meeting; work which had been greatly facilitated by the collaborative support of IUCN, IWRB, the Swiss League for the Protection of Nature (LSPN), and volunteer staff.

Drawing the attention of participants to the budgetary statement, he introduced document DOC. C.4.5., p.7, Rev.1, and expressed the Bureau's appreciation that a very large majority of Contracting Parties had paid their annual contributions during the triennium 1988-1990. In addition, there had been many generous contributions in excess of the amounts due and further contributions as project funding. In particular the present meeting had been generously supported by the authorities of the Swiss Confederation, Canton of Vaud and city of Montreux, with financial support for delegates having been provided by Canada, Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, USA, Unesco, UNEP, Mekong Secretariat, IUCN and WWF.

In conclusion, the Secretary General expressed his satisfaction with the large attendance at the present meeting; in particular he hoped that many of the observer delegations present would be encouraged to promote the accession of their countries to the Convention.

After thanking the Secretary General, the Chairman invited questions and comments from the floor.

The delegation of Japan announced that the National Parliament of Japan had recently approved payment of the Japanese contributions to the Ramsar budget for the years 1988-1990. This payment would be made during the fiscal year 1990-91.

The Secretary General expressed the Bureau's satisfaction, the Japanese contribution forming a significant part of the total budget. He indicated that he had discussed this matter with the Ambassador of Japan to Switzerland and had requested that the payment should, if possible, be made by the end of calendar year 1990, in order to enable the Bureau to include the contribution within the current triennium budget.

The delegation of Italy assured the meeting that the necessary steps had been taken with the responsible authorities for payment of the outstanding 1989 and 1990 Italian contribution.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the session at 12h00.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Second Session: 27 June 1990, 14h00 - 17h00

Chairman: Mr P. Goeldlin

Secretariat: Mr D. Navid (Secretary General)
Mr M. Smart (Conservation Coordinator)

Rapporteurs: Mr S. Nash
Mr C. Perennou

Opening of the Session

The Chairman opened the session and invited the Director General of IUCN, Dr Martin Holdgate, to present a keynote address to the Conference (see Annex).

Agenda item X: Keynote Address on the Ramsar Convention and Global Climatic Change

Dr Holdgate began by saying that he was honoured and delighted to address the Conference. He emphasized that there were three main themes he would touch upon. Firstly, the Ramsar Convention was now of great and growing importance as an agent of conservation in a world of increasing pressure on nature and natural resources. Secondly, all the achievements of the Convention to date were nothing in comparison with the challenges that lay ahead. Thirdly, among those challenges, climatic change induced by human activities could be the most dramatic and could impose a new dimension on the strategy for conserving the world's wetlands. He went on to say that the Ramsar Convention had to view the conservation of wetlands in the context of human needs. A major priority for the coming triennium would be the extension of the Convention's coverage in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Dr Holdgate reviewed the major threats facing wetlands worldwide, and warned that the current critical situation in Europe could soon be mirrored in the developing world. He stressed the potential dramatic effects that global warming could have on wetlands and he reminded the Conference that research into the effects of global warming was still in its infancy. He said that the common goal of the delegates was to conserve wetlands for future generations, and that in order to achieve this goal it would be essential to raise people's perceptions and awareness of wetlands. Dr Holdgate ended by looking forward to even greater cooperation between governments and conservation bodies involved in wetland conservation. He wished the Contracting Parties success in their deliberations.

The delegation of Italy congratulated Dr Holdgate and then asked questions about the apparent lowering of the Mediterranean sea around the coast of Italy and the recurrent lack of snowfall in the Alps. Dr Holdgate thanked the Italian delegation for raising two most interesting points. He said that climatic models could not, at present, be broken down on a sub-regional basis with any accuracy, and that local changes might be the result of natural climatic fluctuations and crustal movements.

The Chairman thanked Dr Holdgate for his address and for IUCN's continued support to the Convention. He indicated that the address would be included in the Conference proceedings.

Agenda item XI: Presentation of objectives of workshops

The Chairman invited the chairmen of the six workshops to describe the objectives and programmes of each workshop.

A. National Reports (document DOC. C.4.6)

Mr H.A. Clarke began by saying that the workshop would start with a short presentation of regional activities by the regional representatives. He then singled out a number of interesting reports from countries where wetland conservation initiatives were breaking new ground, including Australia, Bulgaria, Chile, South Africa, Tunisia, and USA. He noted that Contracting Parties in Asia and Latin America were very interested in the concepts of wise use and in the processes involved in ensuring effective funding for wetland conservation. He referred to five general questions to be addressed during the workshop, and presented in document DOC. C.4.6.

- (a) Does the greater awareness of environmental issues give sufficient importance to wetlands?
- (b) If so, is there adequate administrative machinery at government level to respond to awareness of wetland issues?
- (c) How are the desirable aims of no-net-loss or no further loss of wetlands to be achieved?
- (d) How are wetlands to be maintained in a natural, if not pristine state?
- (e) How can past wetland loss be quantified?

B. International Law Requirements (document DOC. C.4.7)

Mr V. Koester explained that this workshop was very important in that it would encourage consideration of several aspects of Convention implementation and interpretation with a view to seeking harmonized application of the Convention by the Contracting Parties. He listed the four issues to be addressed by the workshop:

- (a) interpretation of Article 4.2 concerning compensation in cases of delisting of sites or the restriction of boundaries of sites;
- (b) interpretation and application of Article 5 on consultation and coordination mechanisms for shared wetlands, water systems and wetland species;
- (c) the problem of discrepancies between the authentic English and French texts of the Convention; and
- (d) accession requirements.

C. Establishment of Wetland Reserves (document DOC. C.4.8)

Mr T. de Gelder reported on behalf of the Chairman, Mr C. Kalden, that the workshop was structured in two parts. Part one, the morning session, would deal with the establishment of reserves and part two, the afternoon session, would deal with the training of wetland personnel. The workshop would consider how Contracting Parties could best carry out their obligations for reserve establishment and training, what were the training priorities and how training courses could be financed.

D. Conservation of Listed Sites (document DOC. C.4.9)

Ms J. Owen began by saying that although the listing of a site was a major achievement it only marked the beginning of a site's conservation. The workshop would consider the List of Wetlands of International Importance. Consideration would be given to the proposal to create an "Admissions procedure" for accepting sites for the List. The workshop would review the growing list of sites facing change in ecological character (now numbering 46) and the potential threats facing them. It would review the current Monitoring Procedure and its implementation, and investigate future improvements to the site database.

E. Wise Use (document DOC. C.4.10)

Mr S. Eldoy began by emphasizing that the concept of Wise Use was the backbone of the Convention and would without doubt be the central theme for sustainable development in wetland conservation in the future. The workshop would consider the report from the Working Group on Criteria and Wise Use.

The key issues raised in the workshop would be:

- (a) knowledge of, and information on, wetlands and their values;
- (b) awareness among decision makers and the public;
- (c) legislation;
- (d) planning procedures;
- (e) management; and
- (f) institution building.

He also thanked the Government of the Netherlands on behalf of the Convention for its project support of about US\$ 450,000 to the Convention Bureau for wise use work which would include support for the appointment of a Wise Use Officer.

The Chairman thanked Mr S. Eldoy and reiterated his thanks to the Government of the Netherlands.

F. International Cooperation for Wetland Conservation (document DOC. C.4.11)

Mr R. Schlatter noted that Workshop F would devote itself to three aspects of international cooperation:

- (a) cooperation for shared wetlands and water catchment systems;
- (b) cooperation for the conservation of migratory species dependent upon wetlands; and
- (c) cooperation for improved mechanisms for development assistance.

The Chairman thanked all the workshop chairmen for their most comprehensive summaries.

The delegation of the United Kingdom announced that at 15h00 on 27 June 1990, the UK Minister for the Environment had announced the designation of the first Ramsar site in a UK Dependent Territory, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and had indicated UK's continuing support for the Convention.

The Chairman thanked the delegation of the United Kingdom for this most welcome news.

The Secretary General announced that the depositary of the Convention, Unesco, had just reported that Bolivia and Sri Lanka had completed the formalities for becoming Contracting Parties.

Upon these most welcome items of news, the Chairman closed the meeting at 17h00.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Third Session: 28 June 1990, 09h00 - 12h30

Chairman: Mr P. Goeldlin

Secretariat: Mr D. Navid (Secretary General)
Mr M. Smart (Conservation Coordinator)

Rapporteurs: Mr P. Galland
Mr T.A. Jones

Opening of the Session

Opening the session, the Chairman extended a warm welcome to the Chairman of the Conference Organizing Committee, Mr J.-P. Reitz. The participants expressed their gratitude for the arduous task which he had undertaken so well.

The Chairman gave the floor to the Secretary General.

The Secretary General noted that at the end of the previous plenary session he had the pleasure of announcing the accession to the Convention of Bolivia and Sri Lanka. He was now delighted to announce that the Bureau had since been informed of the accession of Guatemala as the fifty-eighth Contracting Party. Furthermore, Unesco had informed the Bureau that Burkina Faso had deposited an instrument of accession and had designated three sites for the List of wetlands of international importance, although maps and descriptions of these wetlands were still awaited.

Agenda item XII: Administrative Matters (Programme and Budget 1991-1993; Standing Committee Matters; Bureau Arrangements)

Introducing the agenda item, the Chairman noted that whilst the Conference should devote as much time as possible to technical and conservation matters, the present session had to consider a number of crucially important administrative questions.

The Chairman drew the attention of delegates to the documentation for the session, which was as follows:

DOC. C.4.12

Programme 1991-1993

DOC. C.4.13	Financial and Budgetary Matters
DOC. C.4.14	Standing Committee Matters
DOC. C.4.15 (Rev.1)	Secretariat Matters

The Chairman noted that each of the documents had been reviewed by the Standing Committee and would be presented to the session by a member of that Committee.

The Chairman invited the UK observer in the Standing Committee, who had been Chairman of the Programme Sub-Group, to introduce document DOC. C.4.12.

The Chairman of the Programme Sub-Group referred to partnership under the Convention, noting that there had been a rapid acceleration of activities since decisions to restructure the administration of the Convention had been taken at the Third Meeting of the Conference in Regina. The Programme Sub-Group had identified activities which were proposed for implementation during the next triennium. He paid tribute to the important roles played by the members of the Sub-Group, and to the Bureau staff; he was especially grateful to the Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee who had produced a valuable “chapeau” to document DOC. C.4.12, which had been circulated as DOC. C.4.12 Annex 1, Attachment 1, Addendum 1.

Turning to DOC. C.4.12 Attachment 2, the Chairman of the Sub-Group noted that certain areas of activity required particular attention; the proposed list of items to be treated as top priority included the following three areas for attention during 1991-1993:

- Conservation and management measures for wetland sites
- Development assistance and international co-operation for shared water resources and shared species
- Formulation and implementation of the concept of “wise use” of wetlands

He pointed out that owing to budgetary constraints, it had been necessary to assign priority levels to each potential activity. Activities had been divided into “essential”, “desirable - high priority”, “desirable - medium priority” and “desirable - low priority” categories. The list of objectives was not exhaustive but was intended to provide a basic framework for viewing future Convention activities. All essential and certain highly desirable activities could be undertaken within the budget proposed in document DOC. C.4.13, whilst further highly desirable activities might be undertaken with additional project funding.

In conclusion, the Chairman of the Sub-Group expressed his hope that delegates would find document DOC. C.4.12, and the associated attachments and addendum, to be acceptable and commended the proposed triennial programme for approval.

The Chairman opened the floor for discussion.

The delegation of Spain expressed concern that a number of definitions and responsibilities laid down assigned in the programme documentation diverged from the spirit of the Convention; a more precise formulation was needed. Furthermore, the priorities for the Bureau were not always equivalent to the priorities for Contracting Parties. The programme documentation over-emphasized Bureau activities and lacked reference to national action programmes. Spain

considered the programme documents to be of very great importance but would appreciate clarification of these matters.

In reply, the Chairman of the Sub-Group noted that the programme was specifically intended to be an overview of future Bureau activities. It would be presumptuous to offer suggestions for the development of national programmes which were the prerogative of individual Contracting Parties.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany congratulated the Secretariat and Sub-Group for producing the proposed programme, which set out clearly what the Bureau should undertake in the next triennium. However, he expressed concern that the Bureau should not be involved in the compilation of shadow lists, which was the task of each Contracting Party.

The Chairman of the Sub-Group stressed that Contracting Parties should indeed take the lead in developing such shadow lists and the Bureau should focus its attention on promoting the designation of wetlands for the List.

Drawing the attention of participants to page 3 point (a) I of document DOC. C.4.12 Attachment 1, the Secretary General noted that the listing of new Ramsar sites could be greatly assisted by the development of shadow lists and inventories; such activities were often carried out by the Bureau's partner organizations as well as by the Contracting Parties themselves. Contracting Parties had the authority and responsibility for programming Bureau activities and the Sub-Group had merely identified priorities. The proposed programme did not presume to indicate activities which should not be undertaken and priorities could also be adjusted on a regional basis.

The delegation of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) also congratulated the Sub-Group for completing a difficult task extremely well. WWF was extremely pleased that conservation and management of wetland sites had been identified as the top priority. Document DOC. C.4.18 demonstrated that there were problems at many Ramsar sites and the Monitoring Procedure was a vital tool for addressing these matters. WWF therefore proposed that the Monitoring Procedure be assigned to the "essential" activities.

The Chairman of the Sub-Group explained that the "essential" category contained only those activities without which the Bureau would cease to function. The Monitoring Procedure could not be considered as such an activity, although it was clearly of major importance and had therefore been assigned to the "disirable-high priority" category.

The delegation of Italy supported fully the priorities outlined in document DOC. C.4.12 but expressed some concern over the relationship between the Standing Committee, the Bureau and the Contracting Parties. Italy considered that the Monitoring Procedure should remain a highly desirable activity.

The Secretary General reminded participants that it was necessary to consider the four administrative documents (DOC. C.4.12 to DOC. C.4.15 Rev.1) together. The Standing Committee had been appointed to supervise activities under the Convention between meetings of the Contracting Parties, especially with regard to oversight of the Bureau's work.

The Chairman of the Sub-Group added that the Bureau functioned as the communications centre for the Convention, facilitating interaction between the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee and Convention partners. Further information could be found on page 5 of Attachment 1 to document DOC. C.4.12. Providing that the Bureau was given sufficient facilities and resources, it could ensure that strong linkages were maintained.

The Director General of IUCN referred to the many areas of cooperation between the Ramsar Convention and IUCN. IUCN regarded the Convention as the principal international instrument for safeguarding that part of the earth's biological diversity that occurs in wetland situations. He noted, with pleasure, the information document on "support from IUCN and IWRB to the Ramsar Programme 1991-1993", and endorsed its proposals for expanded cooperation in four specific areas:

- listing of wetlands of international importance
- establishment of a network of wetland protected areas adequate for safeguarding biological diversity and making provision for the possible impact of global climate change
- the promotion of wise use of wetlands
- the provision of information, education and training

IUCN's proposed programme for 1991-1993 included an annex on wetlands, which would be made available to participants. All comments would be gratefully received. The global network of IUCN regional offices was at the disposal of the Convention to help promote the accession of new Contracting Parties and to assist in the general dissemination of information about the value of the Convention. Furthermore, IUCN attached very great importance to the existence of the Ramsar Bureau within the IUCN headquarters and hoped that continued strong partnership between Ramsar and IUCN would serve to achieve the common goals of the two organizations.

The delegation of India welcomed the programme documentation and emphasized the extreme importance of training and assistance for developing countries. India suggested that these activities be transferred to the essential category. Developing countries required urgent assistance for conserving and managing the wetlands which they had listed under the Convention. A fund should be established to promote the wise use of wetlands in developing countries.

The Chairman of the Sub-Group noted that both training and assistance in implementation of the wise use concept had already been assigned to the highly desirable category and were therefore covered by the proposed budget for 1991-1993. With regard to the Indian delegation's proposal for the establishment of a technical assistance fund, a detailed proposal would be required.

The Chairman drew the present discussion of programme matters to a close, reminding participants that the plenary session on Monday 2 July would return to this agenda item. He then invited the delegation of Switzerland, a member of the Standing Committee, to introduce document DOC. C.4.13, "Financial and Budgetary Matters".

The delegation of Switzerland noted that document DOC. C.4.13 provided:

- a background summary

- a draft resolution on financial and budgetary matters (Annex)
- the proposed budget 1991-1993 (Attachment 1 to the resolution)
- a scale of Contracting Party contributions based on the proposed budget and the United Nations present scale of assessments (Attachment 2 to the resolution)
- terms of reference for the financial administration of the Convention (Attachment 3 to the resolution)

In reviewing the budget, the Standing Committee had initially determined that sufficient funds should be available to enable the undertaking of those Convention activities identified as essential or high priority in the desirable section of the proposed programme document DOC. C.4.12. This earlier proposal had envisaged eight Bureau staff (five professional and three support staff) and a total budget of about SFr 1,400,000, representing an increase of more than 100% since the budget adopted at the Third Meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties in Regina, 1987.

Following considerable review, the Standing Committee had decided to propose a more modest budget to the present meeting. The budget proposed in document DOC. C.4.13 therefore allowed for six Bureau staff (four professional and two support staff) and represented a less substantial increase of 67%. This would be sufficient to permit the undertaking of all essential activities and about half of the high priority activities; efforts would be made to secure external funding for the remaining high priority activities.

The delegation of Switzerland was convinced that the proposed budget represented the absolute minimum for the administrative and technical operation of the Convention. Activities during the last triennium (1988-1990) had only been possible with the help of substantial external contributions; this had been a perpetual source of insecurity and the situation needed rectifying in the next triennia. A first step would be taken with the proposed budget. As a member of the delegation of Switzerland, he was ready to accept the budget, and assured participants that Switzerland would continue to provide additional support for the work of the Convention.

The Secretary General recalled that the budget had been prepared in relation to the programme document, and, for the first time, it would be possible to plan in detail expenditures on Convention activities.

Referring to the budget lines contained in document DOC. C.4.13 Attachment 1, the Secretary General highlighted a few areas where further explanation might be required:

Staff costs: salaries would be based on the IUCN scale which was linked to the Swiss Civil Service scale. The proposed triennial budget assumed low annual rate of inflation.

Expert services: the proposed programme was more detailed than that for the last triennium, with a specific line for scientific services to be provided by IWRB. This represented an increase of some SFr5000.

Monitoring Procedure: the Monitoring Procedure had not appeared in the 1988-1990 budget and the currently proposed budget only contained a minimal amount for this activity which would therefore require additional external funding.

Legal services: the proposed budget contained a minimal amount for this important budget line.

Travel: there was no increase in the proposed budget over that contained in the 1987-1990 budget.

Purchase of equipment: this was a minimal area of expenditure, thanks to the facilities provided by IUCN.

Administrative Services: co-location with IUCN precluded the need to hire additional administrative staff.

Reporting: there was no core funding proposed for the newsletter which would therefore have to remain as an activity supported by external funding. The Bureau was most appreciative of the support received from Canada and non-governmental organizations in Canada and the USA during the triennium 1988-1990. To produce 4000 copies of each newsletter in English, French and Spanish, as was presently the case, would cost approximately SFr 65,000.

Support to delegates: this was an important activity but only minimal funding was provided for in the proposed budget.

Contingency fund: it was important to maintain sufficient reserves to guard against any unforeseen financial problems.

The total budget of just over SFr 1,000,000 represented a substantial increase on the previous triennium but the Secretary General urged delegates to approve the proposal in order to permit the Convention to pursue its conservation goals as reflected in the programme document.

The delegation of Switzerland urged delegates to adopt the budget as proposed. He emphasized again that, for full comprehension of the budget document, it should be related to the budget document at the end of document DOC. C.4.12, drawn up with reference to essential and desirable activities.

The delegation of the Netherlands stressed that the budget was a minimum and reminded Contracting Parties of the strong need for continued external financial support. The Netherlands pledged to continue the provision of additional voluntary contributions.

On behalf of the four Nordic countries, the delegation of Sweden expressed support for the idea of a technical assistance fund, as detailed in WWF's position paper which had been circulated to all participants. Such a fund would greatly strengthen the Convention's activities in developing countries. An increase in the Monitoring Procedure budget line was also required.

The delegation of Spain considered that the budget could not be discussed adequately before the programme document DOC. C.4.12 had been finalized. Referring to line 2(a) of the proposed budget, "scientific work by IWRB", the delegation considered that scientific services should be

sought from diverse sources and not solely from IWRB. The specific reference to just one organization should therefore be deleted.

The delegation of Ireland was concerned that insufficient information was available to enable delegates to compare budgets for the two triennia 1988-1990 and 1991-1993. Ireland was also concerned that the annual contributions should be recalculated to check for possible errors.

The Secretary General assured the delegation of Ireland that calculation of the annual contributions would be checked thoroughly and that a document comparing budget lines in the two triennia would be prepared as soon as possible. Direct comparison would, however, be difficult as the proposed budget envisaged six staff based in Switzerland, in comparison with two staff based in the UK and two in Switzerland in the last triennium. He drew attention to the financial implications of transferring UK staff, stating that little or no extra expenditure would be incurred.

The observer for WWF noted that wetland conservation was one of WWF's highest priorities. There were some 330 WWF wetland projects around the world and WWF actively contributed to Ramsar activities. The Monitoring Procedure had been a crucial tool for promoting the conservation of Ramsar sites but the proposed budget line for 1991-1993 represented only one third of the total annual expenditure (SFr 105,000) on the Monitoring Procedure in 1988 and 1989. WWF had provided almost 50% of this funding and urged the Contracting Parties to maintain the level of funding for the Monitoring Procedure at around SFr 100,000. If the Contracting Parties approved this proposal, WWF pledged to contribute an additional SFr 20,000.

Referring to the proposal made by the delegations of Sweden and India for the establishment of a technical assistance fund, the observer for WWF stressed the vital importance of the Convention being able to offer material benefits to developing countries, especially if Ramsar was to attract large numbers of new Contracting Parties in Asia, Africa and Latin America, where Parties were still relatively few in number. The observer for WWF proposed that such a fund should be established with around SFr 200,000 and pledged to contribute SFr 20,000 should the Contracting Parties approve establishment of the fund.

The delegation of Switzerland noted that it was true only SFr 30,000 had been budgeted for the Monitoring Procedure, but this excluded staff and other costs supporting this activity. The budget figure included in document DOC. C.4.12 was SFr 125,000, at least half of which, some SFr 60,000, was certainly covered in the proposed budget.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany raised three points. Whilst realising that the proposed budget was only the second in the Convention's history, the Federal Republic of Germany nevertheless supported the observations of the delegation of Ireland, with regard to the need for a direct comparison of the budgets for the two triennia. There was also the need for an explanatory note in connection with the more important differences. Delegates could only determine the need for a contingency fund with more information on past and present income/expenditure.

The Secretary General recalled that all Contracting Parties had received the audited accounts for 1987 and 1988 and, more recently, for 1989. The Standing Committee had also reviewed the

financial arrangements in great detail. He drew the attention of participants to the fact that the 1988-1990 budget had been drawn up and approved in US dollars. Fluctuations in the dollar exchange rate between the time of the circulation of the budget in December 1986 and its adoption in Regina had effectively reduced the available income to the Convention, necessitating shifts between budget lines by the Standing Committee and making reliance upon external funding even more necessary during the triennium.

The delegation of Uganda wished to join with other delegations in expressing appreciation of the work carried out by members of the Standing Committee who had presented papers during the session. Uganda appreciated the statements made by IUCN and WWF with regard to collaboration and technical assistance in the area of wetland conservation and management in developing countries, where wetland resources faced increasing pressures. Uganda especially wished to support the proposal for the establishment of a technical assistance fund.

The Secretary General stated that the first draft budget considered by the Standing Committee had provided for the recruitment of an officer to work on matters relating to wise use. However, the Standing Committee had removed this provision from the revised budget now proposed for adoption, and had instructed the Secretary General to seek sources of external funding. The Secretary General was delighted to announce that it would now be possible to appoint a wise use officer, thanks to an extremely generous project contribution which had been made by the government of the Netherlands. He found the proposal for the establishment of a technical assistance fund very exciting and hoped that a way would be found for such a fund to come into being.

The Chairman invited the Vice-Chairman of the Conference, in his capacity as Chairman of the Standing Committee, to introduce document DOC. C.4.14, "Standing Committee matters".

Referring to pages 82-83 of the Basic Texts and Recommendations 1971-1987, the Chairman of the Standing Committee recalled that the Contracting Parties had established the Standing Committee at the Regina Conference in 1987. The draft Resolution in document DOC. C.4.14 contained only two substantive changes compared with the text on Standing Committee matters which had been adopted in Regina. These changes were contained in paragraphs 1(c) and 2(e). Other changes were of a minor editorial nature. Paragraph 1(c) had been amended so that the Standing Committee would, in future, be responsible for the supervision of Bureau personnel matters. Paragraph 2(e) had been amended in order to ensure some continuity of experience in the Standing Committee.

The delegation of Belgium referred to paragraph 2(e) of document DOC. C.4.14 and asked for clarification of the "exceptional circumstances" mentioned in the text.

The Chairman of the Standing Committee and the Secretary General wished to stress that, whilst it was desirable for membership of the Standing Committee to be shared by as many Contracting Parties as possible, it was essential that some continuity be maintained; if the Regina text was not amended, the entire Standing Committee would be ineligible for re-election for a further term of office.

The delegation of Poland reported that the East European regional consultation meeting of the previous evening had agreed by consensus that the current arrangement separating Europe into

Eastern and Western European regions should come to an end. It had been recommended that a working group should be established to formulate a proposal in this respect.

The delegation of Pakistan wished to support the proposal to form a working group to review the geographical distribution of the seven current Ramsar regions. The delegation also supported the view expressed by the Standing Committee Chairman and Secretary General that continuity of membership of the Standing Committee was necessary.

The delegation of Mauritania supported wholeheartedly the Polish proposal. The African delegations required further time in which to consider regional representation and would be holding further informal meetings.

The Secretary General stated that the Bureau was aware of the necessity for restructuring regional representation and would be pleased to receive concrete proposals.

The delegation of the Netherlands expressed doubts over the possibility of concluding satisfactorily the review of regional representation during the present meeting.

The delegation of Italy suggested replacing the present regions with a system based on purely geographical characteristics.

The delegation of Kenya supported the views of delegations which had expressed the need for revision of regional representation. In order to ensure both rotation and continuity of membership of the Standing Committee, the delegation suggested that it would be appropriate to establish a system whereby a certain percentage of the Standing Committee membership would retire by ballot.

After drawing discussion of Standing Committee matters to a close, the Chairman invited the delegation of the USA, a member of the Standing Committee, to introduce document DOC. C.4.15 (Rev.1) "Secretariat Matters".

The delegation of the USA stressed that the Convention Secretariat was still in its infancy. The Regina Conference had established a secretariat with an administrative, legal and policy unit located with the headquarters of IUCN and a technical and conservation unit located with the headquarters of IWRB. Three years on, it had become clear that the location of the Bureau in two separate offices was unworkable. The Standing Committee was therefore laying before the present meeting a draft resolution providing for greater clarity on the respective lines of authority between the Standing Committee, the Director General of IUCN and the Convention Bureau. The draft resolution furthermore provided for the consolidation of the Bureau staff into one office hosted by IUCN. A revised memorandum of agreement between IUCN and IWRB provided for a continued formal role for IWRB in the provision of scientific and technical support services to the Bureau.

Endorsing the comments made by the delegation of the USA, the Secretary General stressed the problems inherent in having only four permanent staff based in two locations 1000 miles apart. It had been decided to propose consolidation to Switzerland not only because of the presence of IUCN, but also because of the country's central position, ease of access, the presence of many international organizations and the generous support of the Swiss authorities. Having reviewed

briefly some of the services which it was envisaged that IWRB would provide to the Convention, the Secretary General concluded by commending the consolidation plans to the participants.

The delegation of Tunisia stressed that it was essential for the Secretary General of the Convention to be appointed by the Standing Committee.

The delegation of the USA clarified the position, stating that, for both legal and practical reasons, the final appointment of the Secretary General would be made by the Director General of IUCN, but that the Standing Committee would be responsible for the selection procedure and making recommendations to the Director General of IUCN.

The Director General of IUCN wished to confirm that it was unthinkable for the Director General of IUCN to veto a proposal made by the Convention Standing Committee.

The delegation of Spain agreed with the principle of Bureau consolidation into one location but expressed concern over some of the details contained in the draft memorandum of agreement between IUCN and IWRB. It was essential that the Monitoring Procedure be carried out by the best available experts, whether or not they were based with IWRB. This also applied to education and training programmes. When Spain provided project funding, it wished to select freely the experts involved in carrying out the work concerned. Finally, the delegation requested clarification with regard to the reference to work on a shadow list of wetlands of international importance.

The delegation of the USA stressed that neither the Bureau nor the Standing Committee considered it possible for the Bureau to provide all the expertise required for technical and scientific work under the Convention. IWRB should be the primary, but not exclusive source of scientific support. In the case of the Monitoring Procedure it was the responsibility of the Bureau to seek the best possible expertise for the specific wetlands involved.

The Secretary General confirmed that it was not the Bureau's intention to promote an exclusive agreement with IWRB and he stressed that the Monitoring Procedure was never implemented without the request and consent of the Contracting Party concerned.

The delegation of Italy shared the concerns of Spain and requested clarification of the points raised.

The Director of IWRB drew the attention of participants to a letter from the President of IWRB to the Chairman of the Standing Committee. Whilst IWRB's Executive Board had felt some initial concern, it now considered that the proposed consolidation and revised memorandum of agreement represented a major step forward for the Convention. Referring to the information documents on "Support from IUCN and IWRB to the Ramsar Programme 1991-1993" and "Report to the Contracting Parties of the Ramsar Convention by IWRB", the Director of IWRB commented on the exceptional working relationship which existed between international wetland conservation organizations. He considered that IWRB could play a major role in supporting the Convention, especially by delivering results on the ground for Contracting Parties. However, IWRB would never presume automatically to provide the experts which were undoubtedly required for this work.

Drawing discussion to a close, the Chairman proposed that the Standing Committee should meet that evening to further review the matters raised during the present session. This meeting would be open to Contracting Parties only.

The Chairman of the Credentials Committee announced that several delegations had yet to deposit their credentials. He urged that this be done as soon as possible.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the session at 12h30.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Fourth Session: 2 July 1990, 09h00 - 12h30

Chairman: Mr P. Goeldlin

Secretariat: Mr D. Navid (Secretary General)
Mr M. Smart (Conservation Coordinator)

Rapporteurs: Mr T.A. Jones
Mr S. Nash
Mr C. Perennou

Opening of the Session

The Chairman opened the session by congratulating the participants on the excellent progress of the conference so far, achieved through very open discussion, notably in the workshops, and the very constructive spirit. He praised the secretariat for producing the extensive documentation for this session so rapidly.

The Chairman extended an official welcome to the Minister for Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment of Jordan, Mr Abdel Karim Dughmi, and the Minister of Environment Protection of Uganda, Mr Moses Kintu.

The Chairman then handed over the chair to the Vice-Chairmen, Mr H.A. Clarke for the morning session and Mr A.L. Rao for the afternoon session.

Vice-Chairman Clarke took the chair and announced that the agenda of the morning session would include a review of the draft reports of plenary sessions, documents PLEN. C.4.1, PLEN. C.4.2 and PLEN. C.4.3, the final adoption of document DOC. C.4.16 Admission of Observers, and the continuation of Agenda item XII "Administrative Matters".

Plenary Document PLEN. C.4.1:

The Summary report of the first plenary session was adopted without amendment, by consensus.

Plenary Document PLEN. C.4.2:

The Director General of IUCN referred to the summary of his Keynote Address and requested that paragraph 2, sentence 2 should read “He said that climatic models could not, at present, be broken down on a sub-regional basis with any accuracy, and that local changes might be the result of natural climatic fluctuations and crustal movements.”

The delegation of Norway, referring to page 3, sub-heading E. Wise Use, paragraph 3, said that the financial support offered by the Government of the Netherlands was US\$ 450,000 and not US\$ 600,000 as stated.

Document PLEN. C.4.2, with the above amendments, was then adopted by consensus.

Plenary Document PLEN. C.4.3:

The delegation of Switzerland proposed minor amendments to the French text which had already been passed in writing to the secretariat.

Referring to page 7, paragraph 4, line 2, the delegation of Sweden asked that the word “proposed” be amended to “idea with a”.

The delegation of WWF stated that on page 8, paragraph 1, should read “almost 50%” instead of “about 25%”.

The delegation of Kenya requested that page 10, paragraph 4 line 5, “retirement by ballot”, should be amended to “.... whereby a certain percentage of the Standing Committee membership would retire by ballot”.

Document PLEN. C.4.3, with the above amendments, was then adopted by consensus.

The Conference approved the Chairman’s suggestion that, in preparation of the final published version of the Summary report of the plenary session, the Bureau be empowered to make any necessary editorial corrections, without changing the substance of the text.

Agenda item VII: Admission of observers (continued)

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary-General presented document DOC. C.4.16 (Rev.1) which included several additional observers, whose participation had been agreed by the Contracting Party concerned. The observer from the Bangladesh Society for the Conservation of Wildlife and Resources requested that his organization be included under section 2, “Non-Governmental Organizations”.

Document DOC. C.4.16 (Rev.1) was adopted by consensus with the above amendment.

Agenda item XIII: Report of the Credentials Committee (continued)

The Chairman called upon the Chairman of the Credentials Committee, Mr J. Renault (Belgium), to present the report. Mr Renault stated that 35 of the 50 Contracting Parties present had

submitted credentials which appeared acceptable, despite certain shortcomings. The Committee would continue its work, report to the final plenary session on 4 July and would propose a Recommendation recalling the one adopted at Groningen which stressed the need for proper credentials at meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Agenda item XII: Administrative Matters (continued)

Programme, 1991-93

During review of document DOC. C.4.12 (Rev.1) the Chairman of the Programme Sub-Group recalled that the Standing Committee had met in open session on the evening of 28 June to consider the document. He pointed out that this was not the final version and that the section on membership and partner organizations would be amended. He thanked all those who had contributed to the revised document.

The delegation of Spain congratulated the Chairman of the Programme Sub-Group and the Standing Committee on their achievements.

The delegation of France proposed that Activity 1.I (b) "Promotion of the designation of more sites on the Ramsar List" should be upgraded from Medium to High Priority, with a subsequent demotion of item 3. III (a) "Disseminating information and research" to the Medium Priority category. The observer from Friends of the Earth and the Director General of IUCN supported this proposal and noted that while Ramsar was an important instrument for conserving the biological diversity of the earth's wetlands, there was considerable need to expand the List. Putting Activity 1.I (b) into the High Priority category would give the right signal in this respect.

The delegation of the United Kingdom remarked that such an alteration would have financial implications. Furthermore, the delegation of the United States stressed the importance of the activity concerning dissemination of information. At the suggestion of the Chairman, it was agreed not to pursue the proposed change in priority order of programme items.

The Chairman concluded that there was general agreement on the document and that on the basis of comments received it should be finalized for approval in the final plenary session on 4 July.

Financial and Budgetary Matters

The Secretary General reminded delegates that document DOC. C.4.13 (Rev.1) on this subject should be considered in the light of draft resolution RES C.4.3 which dealt with the establishment of the proposed Wetland Conservation Fund. Document DOC. C.4.13 (Rev.1) had been considered in the plenary sessions of 27 and 28 June and all comments had been taken into consideration. He noted that Point 5 on page 2 of the Draft Resolution on Financial Matters (document DOC. C.4.13 Annex) had been expanded to include reference to a Wetland Conservation Fund, and hence would need to be adjusted in light of discussion on draft resolution RES. C.4.3. The Secretary General pointed out that Attachment 1 of document DOC. C.4.13, the Budget for 1991-1993, now included a new budget line 2, b) "Other Scientific Work" and there was now an addendum to the budget giving comparisons between 1990's expected out-turn and the 1991 budget.

The delegation of the USA presented a Draft Resolution on the Wetland Conservation Fund, noting that it had been produced in cooperation with a number of other delegations. It was recalled that in the opening plenary sessions, the delegations of India, the Nordic countries and Uganda had stressed how critical the establishment of such a fund would be for the future effective functioning of the Convention. Realizing that some delegations had no authority to approve budget increases, the delegation of the USA suggested a provision for voluntary contributions.

The delegation of the USA noted a number of minor amendments to draft resolution RES. C.4.3:

Paragraph e) ii) should be amended from “such as monitoring” to “such as inventories, monitoring”

Paragraph e) iii) should read: “activities that will promote ‘wise use’ of wetlands, such as providing seed money for preparation of proposals to be submitted to development assistance agencies and MDB’s”.

The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran indicated its agreement with the draft resolution but suggested that it would not be possible for Iran or other developing countries to meet increased levels of contribution necessary for the creation of such a fund.

The delegation of Italy also welcomed the principle of creating the fund, suggesting that it might be possible to reallocate sums from the 1991-1993 budget lines for use as an initial contribution. For example, reallocation could be made from budget lines 2a and 2b and savings could be made in budget lines 2d, 5 and 7. This would release the sum of SFr 122,000 for 1991.

The observer from Costa Rica then presented a petition, signed by over 100 participants which stated:

“For the Ramsar Convention to achieve its potential for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, it must recognize the needs of developing countries for resources to support implementation of the obligations it imposes. A mechanism for financial assistance to developing countries is essential to help those that are now Contracting Parties, and to encourage those who are not Contracting parties to join. For these reasons, we believe it imperative that this Conference establishes in the budget a fund to support wetland conservation initiatives by developing country Parties.”

The delegation of Kenya endorsed the petition and the draft resolution and announced that, at the African Region Consultative Meeting, African participants to the present meeting had unanimously approved creation of a fund, with a recommendation that the fund should include at least SFr 200,000.

The observer from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) announced the establishment of a fund to be called the Global Environmental Facility by UNDP, the World Bank and UNEP. This fund was designed to complement other sources of funding and could complement the proposed Wetland Conservation Fund. It was expected that the facility would be established by the end of 1990.

The delegation of Chile stated that both the Contracting Parties and the observers from the South American Group supported the initiative by the USA delegation, which they felt would contribute to improved wetland conservation in the region and to closer North-South cooperation.

The delegation of the USA stated that it had no difficulties with the principle of including a fixed sum in the draft resolution, as raised by the delegation of Kenya, but that the proposal had been designed to provide a framework for the creation of the fund. At this point it would be important to establish the principle of a budget line for the Fund. Furthermore, it indicated that the USA intended to make a substantial voluntary contribution to the fund.

On behalf of all the Nordic countries, the delegation of Denmark fully supported the proposal by the delegation of Kenya. It stressed that a footnote to the special budget line for the fund should indicate that substantial voluntary contributions had been pledged. It also proposed that the figure of SFr 200,000 proposed by Kenya be reduced to SFr 100,000, which would mean an increase to the proposed budget of approximately 10% instead of 20%.

The delegation of India fully supported the United States' proposal and suggested that even if such a fund was to be created, the Ramsar Bureau should continue to assist the developing countries in obtaining support from international financial institutions and other donor countries. The delegation of India also felt that if the fund was to be created, assistance in submitting requests to development agencies should be upgraded from the "high priority" to the "essential" list in the programme document. It further considered that a comparison between the 1990 and 1991 budgets indicated some scope for possible reallocation between budget lines. It believed that there was no need to augment the existing budget to accommodate a modest beginning for the Wetland Conservation Fund.

The Chairman noted a general consensus that the principle of a fund was a good one and that it should be included in the budget. However, he sensed that many delegations were not authorized to approve further increases to the budget to endow the fund substantially. He believed it was desirable to encourage voluntary payments to the fund.

The delegate of Kenya stressed that agreement on the principle of establishing the fund was most important but suggested that a budget line, however modest, be established, with a footnote indicating the need for voluntary payments. This would simply endorse the accepted principle of cost-sharing between all the Parties. There was a majority view among the developing country delegations that there should not simply be a reallocation of funds within the existing budget to endow the fund initially.

The delegation of Australia stated that, whilst supportive of the concept of a conservation fund, it could not support any alterations to the budget which would result in an increase to the Australian contribution. A rearrangement of existing budget lines should be sought if it was felt necessary to place core funds in the budget line for a conservation fund.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany welcomed the aims of the Wetland Conservation Fund for the promotion of wetland conservation in developing countries, and indicated the hope that Germany might contribute to the fund on a voluntary basis. The delegation supported the idea of building in a new budget line by means of reallocating money

from other budget lines without increasing the total budget.

The delegation of Italy reiterated its earlier intervention and endorsed the statements of Australia and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The delegation of Ghana explained that it fully supported the initiative of the USA. It recalled that many so-called protected areas in Africa existed only on maps and would be destroyed or degraded unless technical assistance was provided. Such a fund would also attract accession by states that were not Contracting Parties. Reallocation was not sufficient. New funding had to be found, however difficult this might prove.

The delegation of Canada sought clarification of its understanding that the purpose of the proposed fund would be to provide technical assistance and not to function as a bilateral development aid fund. It should not be used for land acquisition, capital equipment expenditures or for the development of physical infrastructures, but rather for those activities outlined in section e) of draft resolution RES. C.4.3.

The delegation of Sweden proposed amendments to the Draft Resolution on Financial and Budgetary Matters (document DOC. C.4.13), recalling the appeal in Regina Recommendation REC. C.3.4 for greater involvement of Development Agencies in wetland conservation. It was agreed that the proposals would be incorporated in the revised draft of resolution RES. C.4.3.

The delegations of Denmark and Iceland, on behalf of all the Nordic countries and Iceland, stressed that it was important first to establish the principle of creating a budget line for the fund. There should be an initial allocation of at least SFr 10,000, which required an increase of only 1% in the proposed budget. The new budget line should not be funded by reallocations from other budget lines. The Danish delegation felt there was a clear majority among delegates in favour of creating a new budget line, with a core funding allocation.

The delegation of Ireland endorsed the positions of Australia and Italy and asked for clarification of the term “Developing Country” in relation to eastern Europe. Ireland also believed that the most efficient way of providing initial fund for the fund was to make savings in other budget lines.

The Chairman said that the Standing Committee should attempt to deal with the definition of “Developing Countries”, taking into account developments in United Nations fora.

The Japanese delegation supported the draft resolution of the USA and stated that income for the fund should be provided on a voluntary basis, as with the Technical Assistance Fund of the CITES Convention.

The Chairman noted that there was general consensus on the necessity to create a budget line for the fund, but that there were strongly differing opinions on the best means of securing income for the fund. He asked whether or not the proposal for a 1% increase in the total budget was acceptable in view of the additional voluntary contributions which would be forthcoming.

The delegation of South Africa supported the principle of the draft resolution but stressed that contributions to the fund should be voluntary.

The Italian delegation reiterated that reallocation between budget lines was the most practical way of providing income for the fund and stated the necessity of a budget line for the fund.

The delegation from the Federal Republic of Germany reiterated its willingness to support voluntary contributions to the fund and reallocations between budget lines.

The delegation of Switzerland noted that Switzerland had been making voluntary annual contributions to the Convention of SFr 100,000 for the past three years, and suggested studying the possibility that in future SFr 10,000 of the Swiss voluntary contribution might be allocated to the budget line for the fund.

The observer from WWF referred to his organization's offer to contribute SFr 20,000 to the fund if the Contracting Parties agreed to an additional budget line containing SFr 200,000. In the light of the comments by Denmark and other delegations, WWF would still be prepared to contribute SFr 20,000 to the fund if this was matched by the Contracting Parties and the total budget was increased by only SFr 20,000.

The delegation of the USA also felt that if a budget line 11 was created for the Conservation Fund it should be shown separately from the operating budget of the Convention.

Closing the long discussion on establishment of the Wetland Conservation Fund, the Chairman noted agreement on the principle of its establishment and on inclusion of a budget line for the Fund. The unsettled question was whether there should be an increase in the budget to provide funds, or whether a reallocation should be made from the existing budget. He recommended that a reallocation of SFr 10,000 be made from the contingency line in the budget and that there be a call for voluntary funds. He asked the Standing Committee and other interested Contracting Parties to meet in a small group outside the plenary session, and to provide a concrete proposal for the last day of the Conference.

The Secretary General was invited to present the revised budget. He noted some typographical errors in the English version of the budget but explained that they did not alter the overall figures. A corrected version would be made available for the final plenary session.

The delegation of the USA suggested that budget lines 2a and 2b be merged and entitled "Scientific Work". It noted that the amount in budget line 2c (Monitoring Procedure) was woefully low, and requested another footnote encouraging voluntary contributions.

The delegation of Ireland asked that more budgetary information be provided by the Secretariat for the next meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, including a financial statement for 1990 indicating both the original budget and the actual outturn. The Secretary General agreed to do so, noting that the audited report of the Bureau's finances for 1988 and 1989 had been circulated to all Contracting Parties. He said that for ease of reference a comprehensive package of financial documents could be prepared for the next meeting.

Standing Committee

The Chairman opened discussion of document DOC. C.4.14 (Rev. 1) by inviting the delegation

of Tunisia, as African representative on the Standing Committee to present a statement from the informal African regional group. The delegation of Tunisia noted that an African sub-committee had been established, with Ghana, Kenya, Senegal and Tunisia as members. It suggested that one member of this sub-committee should be considered as an alternative representative for the region on the Standing Committee and should attend the Committee's meetings. If a similar solution was adopted for other regions, the problem of continuity would be solved. The group strongly suggested that a regional Ramsar meeting be held in Africa before the next meeting of the Contracting Parties in 1993; UNEP and the African Unity Organization should be invited to take part.

The delegation of Tunisia added that, in the view of the African group, the establishment of a Wetland Conservation Fund was critical for the future of the Ramsar Convention, particularly in developing countries. Other African priorities were: training, public awareness, seminars for field staff, research (including socio-economic and cultural studies), application of the Monitoring Procedure and use of African experts.

Attention was next devoted to the draft Resolution on Standing Committee Matters. The delegation of Kenya suggested an amendment to paragraph 2(e), sentence 2, to read "...Committee through the appointment of alternate regional representatives".

The delegation of Pakistan suggested the addition of two amendments, the first one between 1(d) and 1(e), "Promote regional cooperation for the conservation of wetlands", and the second between 2(e) and 2(f), "The Standing Committee, working through the regional representatives, may establish regional Ramsar groups of Contracting Parties for the purpose of promoting regional cooperation amongst Contracting Parties, non-Party States and NGOs". He added that Asian participants had a strong desire for the next meeting of the Conference to be held in Asia, in order to promote wetland conservation in the region and recruit new Contracting Parties.

The delegation of Belgium asked that "although in exceptional circumstances" be removed from 2(e) in the spirit of the Kenyan intervention. This was supported by the delegation of France.

The delegation of Hungary asked that a sentence be added to the footnote at the end of the text, noting that the Standing Committee should consider the division of Europe into eastern and western regions was political rather than geographical. This request was supported by the delegations of the Netherlands and Greece.

The delegation of the USA suggested that the word "advisory" be removed from the preamble of the resolution.

The delegation of Venezuela suggested that, in the footnote to the Draft Resolution, "Southern America" should be amended to read "Latin America and the Caribbean". This proposal had the support of the observer from Costa Rica. The delegation of Chile, the regional representative on the Standing Committee, explained that the term `Southern America` had been employed to cover the Caribbean, Central America and South America. He reported that the informal regional group supported the idea of a regional representative, with an alternate representative from the Caribbean region. The next Conference of the Contracting Parties should study the possibility of appointing members of the Standing Committee both from South America and the Caribbean.

The Chairman noted that there was general agreement as to the content of document DOC. C.4.14 and he requested that the document be revised accordingly and brought back to the final plenary session for adoption.

In closing the session, the Chairman commented that Ramsar had always operated on a basis of consensus, and as a result had been very effective. It was therefore vital to avoid presenting major proposals without proper preparation. Major proposals should be signalled to the Bureau well in advance of the meeting in order to allow the Parties to have adequate opportunity for the study of such proposals. He suggested that the Standing Committee should look into this matter and declared the session closed.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Fifth Session: 2 July 1990, 14h00 - 18h15

Chairmen: Mr H.A. Clarke (Vice-Chairman, Canada)
Mr A.L. Rao (Vice-Chairman, Pakistan)

Secretariat: Mr D. Navid (Secretary General)
Mr M. Smart (Conservation Coordinator)

Rapporteurs: Mr P. Galland
Mr T.A. Jones (Technical Officer)

Agenda item XII: Administrative Matters (continued)

Secretariat Matters

Vice-Chairman Clarke, continuing in the Chair for the conclusion of this agenda item, declared the session open and invited participants to continue discussion of Agenda item XII "Administrative Matters". Referring to document DOC. C.4.15 (Rev.2) "Secretariat Matters" which had been amended in the light of comments made during the third plenary session on 28 June, the Chairman invited any further suggestions for improvement.

The delegation of Italy noted that parts of document DOC. C.4.15 (Rev.2) had budgetary implications and so it was necessary to conclude consideration of the Financial Matters (document DOC. C.4.13) prior to approving this document.

The Chairman agreed that document DOC. C.4.15 (Rev.2) had to be considered in the light of budgetary implications, but that at this point all that was being sought was preliminary approval.

There being no further comments, the Chairman noted preliminary approval for document DOC. C.4.15 (Rev.2) and noted that it would be brought forward on Wednesday, 4 July for formal approval. Vice-Chairman Rao then took the Chair for the remainder of the session.

Agenda item XIII: Workshop Reports

The Chairperson of Workshop A “National Reports”, Mr H.A. Clarke (Canada), presented document W.G. C.4.1, highlighting the principal conclusions which had been reached by the workshop and bringing draft recommendation REC. C.4.3 (National Reports) to the attention of participants. Draft recommendation REC. C.4.3 urged Contracting Parties to submit detailed national reports to the Bureau at least six months prior to each ordinary meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties; many reports to the present meeting had been received too late to permit adequate consideration of their contents.

The delegation of Australia endorsed strongly the section of document W.G. C.4.1 which dealt with coastal and marine systems.

The delegation of Hungary requested that page 2, paragraph 4, line 2 of the report be amended to read: “Following recent deep political changes in Central and Eastern Europe”.

The Chairman noted consensus that document W.G. C.4.1 be approved subject to the amendments raised.

The Chairperson of Workshop B “International Law Requirements”, Mr V. Koester (Denmark), introduced document W.G. C.4.2, draft resolutions RES. C.4.1. and RES. C.4.4 (formerly draft recommendation REC. C.4.1). He noted that page 2 of the report needed some minor correction to replace references to “ecological balance” with “ecological character”. There was also a section on site demarcation missing, which would be submitted to the secretariat for inclusion in the final report.

The Chairperson stressed that the workshop had agreed upon:

- three draft resolutions on: (a) implementation of Article 5; (b) accession requirements; and (c) interpretation of Article 10 bis, paragraph 6. (These draft resolutions would be discussed later in plenary session);
- three “recommendations” to the Standing Committee and/or Bureau asking them to prepare for the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties (a) a draft resolution on the interpretation of Article 4.2; (b) a proposal on standardized usage of either “Resolution” or “Recommendation” in the headlines of documents adopted by the Conference; and (c) an examination of the official German and Russian versions of the Convention in order to solve any linguistic discrepancies; and
- a decision to amend the official French text of the Convention (as agreed in document W.G. C.4.2 Addendum 1) to bring it in conformity with the official English text.

The meeting endorsed the recommendations to the Standing Committee and/or Bureau, and the decision to amend the French text.

Subject to the incorporation of the above amendments, document W.G. C.4.2 was approved by consensus.

Document W.G. C.4.3 was introduced by the Bureau's Technical Officer (who had been the Secretariat member present); the Chairperson of Workshop C "Establishment of Nature Reserves", Mr C.J. Kalden (Netherlands), being unable to attend the present session. The Technical Officer reviewed the main areas of discussion with particular reference to the points covered in draft recommendations REC. C.4.4 and REC. C.4.5.

Referring to the subject of reserve establishment, the delegation of Chad recalled that, on its recent accession to the Convention, Chad had listed a 195,000 ha reserve at Lake Fitri. The delegation expressed the hope that the Bureau would devote attention to wetland conservation and wise use in the basin of Lake Chad, through contacts with the Lake Chad Basin Commission.

Additional interventions were made by the delegations of Greece, Japan, Kenya and Senegal to provide precisions in the draft text of the report.

The Chairman requested the Bureau to draw up the final report of Workshop C to take into account the amendments proposed by the delegations of Australia, Greece, Hungary, Japan, Kenya and Senegal.

The Chairperson of Workshop D "Conservation of Listed Sites", Ms J. Owen (New Zealand), presented the report W.G. C.4.4 and reviewed the subjects which had been debated, together with the conclusions which had led to a series of recommendations, REC. C.4.6, REC. C.4.7, REC. C.4.8, REC. C.4.9 (including site-specific sub-recommendations) and REC. C.4.14.

The delegation of Spain noted that other Conference business had prevented the delegation from being present in Workshop D when the subject of Doñana National Park had been discussed. Spain therefore wished to present information in this session. The present conservation status of the National Park was extremely satisfactory. The size of protected area had increased from 6000 ha in 1965 to 120,000 ha in 1989. Tourist development had not been allowed inside the National Park but there was nevertheless a risk of change in ecological character at the site. Spain had prepared the draft recommendation REC. C.4.9.1 based on the initiative of Spanish NGOs.

Following discussion of document W.G. C.4.4, it was agreed that the Bureau would amend the report to accommodate amendments proposed by the delegations of Belgium, Canada, Greece and Italy. Written amendments were received from the delegation of New Zealand.

The Chairperson of Workshop E "Wise Use", Mr S. Eldoy (Norway), introduced the report W.G. C.4.5. In summarizing the main conclusions of the workshop, he referred participants to draft recommendations REC. C.4.10 and REC. C.4.11.

Proposals for editorial amendments were made by the delegations of Australia, Greece and Italy and, subject to the inclusion of these changes, document W.G. C.4.5 was approved by consensus.

The Chairperson of Workshop F "International Cooperation for Wetland Conservation", Mr R. Schlatter (Chile), noted that the workshop had been divided into three sections (dealing with shared sites, migratory species and the role of development agencies). Two draft recommendations REC. C.4.12 and REC. C.4.13, had been produced by the workshop.

Subject to incorporation of an amendment proposed by the delegation of Japan, document W.G. C.4.6 was approved by consensus.

In summarizing discussion of the agenda item, the Chairman noted that the workshop reports would not be resubmitted to the plenary session but would be corrected in light of comments received and included in the proceedings volume. He, therefore, requested participants to signal their approval of the reports, subject to the incorporation by the Bureau of the comments and amendments which had been proposed. The documents W.G. C.4.1, W.G. C.4.2, W.G. C.4.3, W.G. C.4.4, W.G. C.4.5 and W.G. C.4.6 were adopted by consensus and the Bureau was authorized to undertake the final revision for inclusion in the published Proceedings of the present meeting.

The Chairman then gave the floor to the delegation of France which announced the designation of seven wetlands for the List of wetlands of international importance:

- Biguglia (Haute Corse)
- Marais du Cotentin (Basse-Normandie)
- Brenne (Centre)
- Etangs de la Champagne humide (Champagne-Ardenne)
- Golfe du Morbihan (Bretagne)
- Petite Woëvre (Lorraine)
- Rives du Lac Léman (Rhône-Alpes)

The delegation of France noted that it hoped to designate a further set of new Ramsar sites towards the end of 1990. Furthermore, it was the policy of France to pursue the listing of sites which constituted ecological entities and this might lead to the future designation of very large wetland areas.

The delegation of Switzerland congratulated the delegation of France for its very welcome announcement, particularly with regard to the listing of part of the French section of Lake of Geneva, which might produce a good example of cross-frontier cooperation, given the declaration at the present meeting of Switzerland's intention to designate two areas on the Lake.

Agenda item XIV: Draft Resolutions and Recommendations

The Chairman invited consideration of the draft resolutions and recommendations which had emanated from previous agenda items and circulated to all participants. He noted that time was very limited, so that only points of substance should be raised with editorial points being submitted directly to the Bureau for attention. With the approval of the participants, the Bureau would work on redrafting the documents concerned for resubmission to plenary session on 4 July.

The Secretary General introduced document RES. C.4.1 "Draft Resolution on the Interpretation of Article 10 bis paragraph 6 of the Convention". The delegations of Denmark and Kenya urged participants to approve the resolution.

Noting general consensus, the Chairman invited comments on document RES. C.4.2 "Draft Resolution on the Official and Working Languages of the Conference of the Contracting

Parties”.

The delegation of Chile strongly supported the draft resolution on the grounds that it would be important for the Convention’s effectiveness in Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries.

The delegation of Belgium wished to be informed of the budgetary implications of the resolution, to which the Secretary General replied that a precise calculation had not been made, but that inclusion of an additional official and working language at meetings of the Conference of Contracting Parties would require about ten additional support staff for interpretation, translation and secretarial services, as well as increased technical staff competent in the language. Extra costs involved would have to be met by future host countries, given the lack of budgetary provision for these requirements. He remarked that the use of Spanish would have significant importance for the future effectiveness of meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Following discussion, during which the delegations of Canada and USA made interventions supporting the draft resolution, it was considered that Spanish should become a working language of the Conference, initially by the introduction of simultaneous interpretation only at future meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

The Chairman noted general consensus for the approval of document RES. C.4.2 and requested the Bureau to incorporate the comments raised by participants before the draft resolution was submitted for adoption.

Turning to consideration of document REC. C.4.1 “Draft Recommendation on the Implementation of Article 5 of the Convention”, the Chairman invited participants’ comments. The delegation of Denmark considered that this draft recommendation should, in fact, be a draft resolution. This point was widely accepted.

The delegations of Australia, Greece, Ireland, and USA requested that editorial amendments be made to the draft resolution before it was submitted for adoption. It was agreed that the Bureau should undertake this task in consultation with the Contracting Parties concerned. The observer of ECE indicated that his organization was also active in the field of transboundary wetlands, and offered cooperation.

Following the Chairman’s request for comments on document REC. C.4.2 “Draft Resolution on Accession Requirements”, the delegation of Denmark suggested that this was another example of a draft recommendation which should really be renamed a draft resolution.

The delegation of Greece proposed a change to paragraph one of the draft recommendation text.

Noting general approval for the document, the Chairman requested the Bureau to rename document REC. C.4.2 a resolution and to incorporate the amendment suggested by the delegation of Greece.

The Chairman invited comments on document REC. C.4.3 draft recommendation on “National Reports”; there being no interventions, he noted the consensus of approval and invited comments on draft recommendation REC. C.4.4 on the “Establishment of Wetland Reserves”. Neither this

document, nor REC. C.4.5 “Draft Recommendation on Training” prompted any amendments and, noting general approval for the draft recommendations, the Chairman invited participants to consider draft recommendation REC. C.4.6 on the “Establishment of Shadow Lists of Ramsar Sites”.

The delegation of France was concerned that a document entitled “Important Bird Areas in Europe: Wetlands for the Shadow List of Ramsar Sites” had been circulated with a foreword by the Bureau which appeared to give it some official recognition. France had some reserves on the scientific content. The Secretary General clarified that the document in question had been compiled and distributed by ICBP and IWRB and was not an official Conference document, although the document had been distributed at the Conference for the information of participants.

The delegations of Australia, Canada, Finland, France, and Italy expressed strong concern over use of the phrase “shadow list”. It was agreed that all use of the phrase should be removed from document REC. C.4.6 and replaced by “national wetland inventories” or “national scientific inventories”. Following further discussion the Chairman requested the Bureau to revise document REC. C.4.6 to take note of the points raised.

At the Chairman’s invitation, the session moved on to consider document REC. C.4.7 draft recommendation on “Mechanisms for improved application of the Ramsar Convention”. The delegation of Spain proposed an amendment to the text of the ‘Monitoring Procedure’. The delegation of the USA offered to provide help in providing further definitions for the wetland classification through the Standing Committee.

Thanking the delegation of the USA and noting general approval for this draft recommendation, subject to inclusion of the comments made, the Chairman requested the Bureau to revise the recommendation for resubmission to the plenary session on 4 July.

General consensus for approval was also reached during discussion of document REC. C.4.8, “Draft Recommendation on Change in Ecological Character of Ramsar Sites”, subject to the incorporation of amendments proposed by Belgium and India.

The Chairman then referred to the composite draft recommendation REC. C.4.9 “Ramsar Sites in the Territories of Specific Contracting Parties” and the four site-specific recommendations (REC. C.4.9. 1-4) attached to it, inviting the comments of participants.

The delegations of the Federal Republic of Germany, Iceland, Iran, South Africa, Spain and Yugoslavia proposed amendments to the sections of the Recommendation relating to their own country. The observer from WWF noted the positive cooperation between WWF and Spain in the last years, and expressed strong support for draft recommendation REC. C.4.9.4. With these comments, the Chairman noted broad approval for the draft recommendations REC. C.4.9, REC. C.4.9.1 “Doñana National Park, Spain”, REC. C.4.9.2 “Everglades, USA”, REC. C.4.9.3 “Azraq Oasis, Jordan” and REC. C.4.9.4 “Conservation of the Leybucht” subject to revisions which incorporated the proposed amendments. He requested the Bureau to make the necessary changes and to resubmit the documents for adoption by plenary session on 4 July.

During discussion of draft recommendation REC. C.4.10, “Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance and Guidelines for the Implementation of the Wise Use Concept”, the

delegation of the USA proposed that the Bureau should make two separate draft recommendations, dealing with criteria and wise use respectively. The Chairman noted general consensus approving this proposed amendment and requested the Bureau to make the necessary changes. The Conservation Coordinator remarked that the criteria and guidelines would be appended as an Annex to the recommendations incorporating the additions to Guideline (c) of the criteria which had been discussed earlier in the session.

The Chairman invited comments on draft recommendation REC. C.4.11 “Cooperation with International Organizations”. The delegation of Algeria did not suggest amending the text but reminded the session of the earlier comments made by the delegation of Tunisia stressing the importance of the Convention forming strong links with African organizations.

The Chairman requested the Bureau to reformulate the draft recommendation, to incorporate amendments proposed by the delegations of Denmark and the UK.

Amendments to draft recommendation REC. C.4.12 “Cooperation between Contracting Parties for the Management of Migratory Species” were requested by the delegations of Norway and the USA, and to draft recommendation REC. C.4.13 “Responsibility of Multilateral Development Banks towards Wetlands”, by the delegations of the UK and USA. The Chairman requested the Bureau to reformulate the documents concerned in order to include the proposed amendments.

The final business of the session concerned discussion of draft recommendation REC. C.4.14 (later renumbered REC. C.4.1) on “Wetland Restoration”, during which amendments were requested by the delegations of Ireland, New Zealand, Sweden, UK and the observers from Burkina Faso and the Bellerive Foundation. Noting general approval for the draft recommendation in the light of these comments, the Chairman requested the Bureau to revise the document for resubmission to plenary session on 4 July.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the session at 18h15.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Sixth Session: 3 July 1990, 09h00 - 12h30; 14h00 - 17h00

Chairman: Mr P. Goeldlin

Rapporteur: Mr P. Galland

Agenda item XVI: Wetland Conservation in the Alpine Region

Opening of the Session

The Chairman welcomed the speakers at the session on the Alpine region. He drew the attention of the Conference to the fact that the name of Ramsar was not only that of a town in Iran and of the International Convention on Wetlands, but had also recently been attributed to a new species

of small fly of the Syrphidae family (Platycheirus ramsarensis). He pointed out that the session on the Alpine region had been designed to familiarize guests from abroad with some aspects of Swiss wetlands.

He gave the floor to the first speaker of the day.

1. On the Track of a Water Flow (Professor F. Klötzli, EPF-Zurich)

Mr Klötzli described with the help of a set of slides the flow of water in Europe from mountain summits to the sea via different types of marsh, lake and river. He said that wetlands were subjected to man's influence even at high altitudes in the Alps; this influence increased unceasingly throughout the descent to lowlands and the sea. The speaker considered the different types of wetlands encountered:

- snow and ice on mountain summits;
- sources, streams, marshes and peatlands in the upper valleys;
- rivers winding along valley bottoms or digging steep gorges;
- lakes and large areas of lowland subject to temporary flooding;
- sluggish rivers with their specific riparian vegetation; and
- coastal deltas, estuaries and saltmarshes.

Because of their vulnerability, these wetlands were areas of international importance. They were becoming increasingly rare due to the impact of human activity, and were worthy of protection.

2. Inventories as Protection Instruments

(a) Peat bogs - results of an inventory (A. Grünig, Kosmos, Birmensdorf)

The results of a federal inventory of peat bogs, commissioned by the Swiss League for the Protection of Nature (LSPN) and by WWF-Switzerland and drawn up between 1974 and 1978, were briefly reviewed.

Only 1460 hectares of peat bog survive in Switzerland today, 20% at the most of their original extent. This was equivalent to 0.035% of the area of Switzerland. Peatlands had yielded to the spread of farmland, reforestation, building and peat extraction. Some 500 sites had been surveyed, of which roughly one-third could be considered as being more or less intact. It was necessary to put them under strict protection. This was to be attained by the following measures:

- all peatlands, including the smallest, were of great value and only strict protection could guarantee the survival of organisms related to them;
- the unequal distribution of peatlands called for national coordination of protection measures;
- intact peatlands (506 ha) must be put under strict protection. Those which had been affected by man (953 ha) also required management measures; and
- the areas in the immediate vicinity of these sites must also be protected (buffer

zones), especially in regions of intensive agriculture.

(b) The inventory and the mapping of Swiss alluvial areas (J.-M. Gobat, University of Neuchâtel)

The speaker said that the inventory of alluvial areas had been drawn up on the basis of a recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and in application of the Federal Law on the protection of nature and landscapes. It listed 165 alluvial sites with a total area of 10,200 ha, i.e. 0.25% of the area of Switzerland. Of these, nine had been declared as being of international importance.

The Swiss plateau (40% of the sites) and the central Alps (25%) were the natural regions rich in alluvial areas. Forests covered 55% of the national territory, as compared with herbaceous formations (20%) and open water (16%). The remainder was comprised of vegetation-free areas.

Alongside this activity, a 1:10,000 phytosociological map of the 165 sites of the inventory had been drawn up in order to establish the present state of these sites and to take stock of recent vegetation trends. The following conclusions could be drawn from the report:

- a total of 22 units had been defined and mapped; it was noted that the most abundant ones had unfortunately lost their alluvial character;
- comparison with a study conducted in the 1950s revealed a distinct deterioration of the situation even though alluvial areas were the most species-rich environment in Switzerland; and
- a general deficiency in the restitution rate in water courses was noted. Units displaying an active alluvial character (with erosion or sedimentation) were diminishing; new associations displaying a trend towards drying-out and eutrophication were appearing.

It was essential to implement short- and long-term management measures in order to guarantee the conservation of these exceptional ecosystems.

(c) Cartography of Swiss amphibians, Alpine region (M.K. Grossenbacher, Natural History Museum, Berne)

The Atlas of Swiss amphibians was the result of 22 regional inventory projects conducted in Switzerland between 1973 and 1976. Three hundred persons, mainly amateurs, had visited more than 8,000 breeding areas to survey amphibians. The Atlas presented the results in cartographical form on a 5 x 5 km grid.

In Switzerland there were 18 species of amphibian, two species of salamander, five species of newt, four species of toad and seven species of frog. The most threatened species lived in lowland plains where human influence and habitat destruction was greatest.

The species best adapted to alpine conditions was the common frog (Rana temporaria) which was present in almost all ponds up to an altitude of 2600m. In most parts of the Alps, the typical

species were still abundant and under little threat. However, the drainage of water meadows and levelling work for ski slopes constituted serious threats; moreover, the acidification of lakes on crystalline terrain had in recent years become a real problem: amphibian reproduction was jeopardized because of the fall in pH. The Alps were still a haven for several species of amphibian, but vigilance should not be relaxed.

- (d) Dragonflies - their use as bio-indicators in the management and protection of wetlands (A. Maibach, Zoology Museum, Lausanne)

By virtue of their biology Odonata were intricately linked to wetlands. Many species had become specialized and only occurred in specific environments, which made them excellent bio-indicators.

A recent inventory drawn up by the Swiss League for the Protection of Nature and by the Swiss Centre for Fauna Cartography had made it possible to set up a database, the analysis of which had yielded valuable information to conservationists.

The value of a biotope was determined by rating the scarcity of species encountered and the diversity of the total population. Comparison of data collected over the last 100 years had revealed the steep reduction in wetlands of great value, propitious to the reproduction of dragonflies. Of 81 native species, 75 still occurred in Switzerland, of which more than half were considered to be threatened. The necessary protection measures now had to be taken in order to maintain the biological diversity of the sites studied, and to manage and restore them.

- (e) Waterfowl habitats in Switzerland of international importance
(C. Marti, Swiss Ornithological Station, Sempach)

After signing the Ramsar Convention in 1974, Switzerland had designated the Fanel area as a wetland of international importance in 1976. In 1982 the Bolle di Magadino area had been added to the List. During the present meeting participants had learned with great pleasure that six further sites would be listed in the near future.

A first inventory of wetlands of international importance for waterfowl had been published in 1976. Ten years later, the inventory had been updated so that the trends in bird populations could be followed over a period of several years. The increase recorded in waterfowl populations could be explained in two ways: a general eutrophication of Swiss water bodies had been recorded, and the period under consideration coincided with the invasion of Swiss lakes by the Zebra Mussel.

He noted that, from the biogeographical point of view, Switzerland belonged to both the Baltic/North Sea and the Black Sea/Mediterranean regions: ringing results had proved that ducks wintering in Switzerland originated from both regions. A wetland was considered to be of international importance if it supported 1% of the average total number of wintering birds from these two European biogeographical regions.

Discussion on inventories

In reply to a question from the delegation of Spain, Mr Gobat indicated that 165 alluvial sites were considered to be of national importance and nine of international importance on the basis of

their size, and the variety of their vegetation. Data on fauna had not hitherto been taken into consideration.

Answering a query from the delegation of the USA, which expressed concern about the increase of the Zebra Mussel in North America, Mr. Marti noted that it was eaten by Tufted Duck, Pochard, Goldeneye and Coot. Nevertheless, despite predation levels which could reach 90%, mussel populations were continuing to increase.

Mr Grossenbacher told the observer from FAO that the introduction of salmon into isolated Alpine lakes had disturbed certain amphibian populations.

Mr Grünig informed the delegation of the UK that peat extraction had recently been totally prohibited as a result of a national referendum. The enforcement of this measure however, was unsatisfactory. Switzerland imported 90% of its peat from Germany and Eastern Europe. Systematic use of composting might provide an alternative material.

Mr Klötzli explained to the delegation of France that current research provided a good indication of the diversity of wetlands, but that inter-relationships between species were not fully understood. For the moment, therefore, there was no good wetland typology.

3. Legislation: Legal arrangements for protection of wetlands in Switzerland (B. Walliman, Federal Office of Environment, Forests and Landscape, Berne)

The speaker noted that nature and landscape protection was in the first instance a matter for the cantons. The Confederation had certain obligations and was empowered to pass laws and regulations on species and their habitats. Furthermore, following the approval of the Rothenthurm initiative, marshy sites and habitats of national importance were strictly protected.

Nature and landscape protection was based on two fundamental principles:

- safeguarding and proper management of all natural and landscape resources as a whole, including constructed heritage; and
- special protection for items of special interest and in particular those of national interest.

The Confederation was obliged

- to take account of natural and cultural values when carrying out its duties, with legal standing to take the authorities to court being granted to non-governmental organizations concerned with nature protection;
- to draw up inventories of sites of national importance;
- to designate and map habitats of national importance;
- to provide grants for conservation of sites meriting protection; and

- to make temporary interventions if a habitat or landscape was in imminent danger.

Furthermore, federal laws on hunting, land use planning, environmental protection, water pollution, and on fishing control completed the legal instruments available. The cantons could issue laws and orders for the application of the federal measures, and could approve measures stricter than those established by the Confederation. It was clear that the laws existed, but there was considerable difficulty in applying them.

4. Wetland use and management - the south bank of the Lake of Neuchâtel ("Grande Caricaie") (M. Rollier and M. Antoniazza)

The speakers reported that the "Grande Caricaie" (or Great Reed bed) was Switzerland's largest marsh. It had developed in 1880, following the artificial lowering by three metres of the lake level. The marsh was of remarkable interest for three reasons:

- its size, large by Swiss standards (750 ha of marshland and 800 ha of adjacent wet forest);
- the diversity of the shore habitats; and
- the contact with the shallow lake, and the proximity of countryside relatively free of buildings.

The whole of the area was more or less heavily influenced by human activities. Large parts had been used for agriculture and forestry, while tourism and water-skiing had developed over the years. Man had sought to control vegetation changes; without human intervention, the marshes would have disappeared through eutrophication or bank erosion.

Compensation for the lack of natural "catastrophes" is provided by a series of carefully planned activities, including scrub clearance, mowing and excavation of former ponds that were filling up. These activities were scientifically monitored so as to assess their effectiveness.

In reply to a question from the delegation of the USA, the speakers provided details of the "monster" mowing machine, a vehicle with caterpillar tracks, only one of which had been specially built from materials immediately available.

5. Applied Research: Swiss wetlands, habitats for nesting, migratory and wintering birds (L. Schifferli, Swiss Ornithological Station, Sempach)

The Swiss Ornithological Station was a private organization, financed by the people of the country. Its tasks were to census bird populations, to study migration by carrying out systematic ringing programmes, and to draw up inventories and "Red Lists" as tools for managing wetlands.

Of the 196 nesting species in Switzerland, 81 were on the Red List of threatened species. Thirty percent of the wetland species, which until a few decades earlier had been widespread, were potentially endangered; a detailed inventory carried out between 1977 and 1979 showed that the numbers of several species had dropped below 300 pairs.

The inventory of waterfowl had provided excellent data on the distribution of 32 regular wintering species - grebes, swans, ducks, cormorants, etc. The principal trends were as follows:

- numbers of 16 species varied from year to year without any long-term tendency being apparent;
- the little grebe was the only species whose numbers were dropping regularly; the cause was at present unknown; and
- the populations of 15 species had increased significantly. The sharp increase in cormorant numbers was related both to the increase in the numbers of nesting pairs in Denmark and the Netherlands, where birds wintering in Switzerland originated, and to the increase in food resources in Swiss lakes. The most spectacular increase had been noted in diving ducks and was related to the Zebra Mussel. This change in food resources had led many ducks to change their habits and to visit Switzerland.

Despite this encouraging development, ducks remained very sensitive to disturbance of their habitat. Systematic studies had shown the remarkable effect of banning shooting. Expansion of water sports represented another change requiring special consideration.

In conclusion, the speaker suggested that the word Ramsar had the following meaning:

Really
All
Measures necessary
Should be taken to
Allow waterfowl to
Rest without undue human disturbance.

In reply to a question from the delegation of Ghana on the effects of boat traffic, Mr Schifferli said it was very variable and that he could not provide any figures. He confirmed for the delegation of Pakistan that the 12 sites of international importance in Switzerland held Tufted Ducks.

The delegation of Chile enquired about the origin of several migratory birds and asked whether international cooperation existed. Mr Schifferli confirmed that their origin was known and that the 160,000 Tufted Ducks censused in Switzerland came from an area larger than one million sq km in extent. In response to a question from the observer from Bangladesh, he gave the following details:

- all Swiss lakes were in highly populated areas;
- agriculture was well developed higher in the catchment, which caused water pollution problems; this had a particular effect on vegetation growth, and on the increase of the Zebra Mussel; and
- fishing was very popular and had a very marked effect, particularly by encouraging

the development of boat traffic.

6. The Alpine Range - Europe's water tower, a vulnerable ecosystem
(F. Klötzli)

The speaker pointed out that water from the eternal snows of the Alpine peaks flowing until it reached the ocean, moved through habitats where human impact was ever-increasing. From Alpine meadows that were still more or less intact to intensive croplands in the lower regions, all ecosystems were affected by drainage, application of pesticides, building work and landscape change. The banks of lakes and rivers were also preferred sites for tourist activities, which brought about profound changes in their character. These changes were as follows:

- eutrophication as a result of the general extension of agricultural activities and, in parallel, a change in water quality and total change of river bank vegetation;
- the great majority of water courses in Alpine valleys flowed into reservoirs, which made major changes in their flow and in the quantity of material they carried. Thus regeneration of alluvial areas had become practically impossible; and
- new water surfaces had been created by the dams, which provided waterfowl with new wintering and breeding sites. The artificial Lake of Klingnau, which had been designated a Ramsar site, was an excellent example of this.

This process of eutrophication and of profound change in lakes and rivers was continuing, which emphasized the need for measures to protect and manage wetlands.

Final Conclusions

It could be asked - at a time when major changes were expected, particularly in climatic conditions - what was the purpose of protecting habitats which were apparently going to disappear in any case. The following reply could be given: although all vegetation had been more or less affected by human activities, the appearance of wetlands had changed less than others. Even if conditions were to change, the character of these sites would remain very similar to what they are now. Wetlands which had a chance of surviving the climatic changes expected should, therefore, be conserved. They would also serve as a valuable site for scientific monitoring of these changes.

In response to a question from the observer from Bangladesh, Mr Klötzli noted that the increase in pesticides and insecticides should be given serious consideration, above all perhaps because of their long-term effects on mankind.

The delegation of Belgium, supported by the delegations of France and Pakistan, thanked Switzerland for organizing a study of the Alpine region and for their efforts to broaden discussion. The delegation furthermore suggested that in future the title of the Ramsar Convention be changed by deleting the final words "particularly as waterfowl habitat".

The Chairman welcomed this proposal, which fully reflected the aims of those responsible for organizing the day's programme - to draw participants' attention to the manifold aspects of wetland ecosystems without restriction to waterfowl. He thanked the speakers for their

contributions and declared the session closed.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PLENARY SESSION

Seventh session: 4 July 1990, 09h00 - 12h00

Chairman: Mr P. Goeldlin

Secretariat: Mr D. Navid (Secretary General)
Mr M. Smart (Conservation Coordinator)

Rapporteurs: Mr P. Galland
Mr T.A. Jones
Mr C. Perennou

Opening of the Session:

The Chairman declared the session open and gave the floor to the Secretary General.

The Secretary General announced that Unesco had informed the Bureau of Czechoslovakia's accession to the Convention as the fifty-ninth Contracting Party. Ecuador had also deposited an instrument of accession, but had not yet designated a site for inclusion in the List of wetlands of international importance. The Secretary General urged Ecuador and Panama to complete site designations as soon as possible in order for these countries to participate fully in the Convention, and recalled that Burkina Faso would quickly become a Contracting Party, should the present meeting approve draft resolution RES. C.4.5 "Resolution on Accession Requirements". Burkina Faso had given Unesco the names of three wetlands to be included in the List, but had not yet provided descriptions or maps showing the boundaries of these sites. The United Kingdom had completed the necessary formalities for acceptance of the Regina Amendments, bringing the total number of Contracting Parties which had done so to ten.

Agenda item XIII: Report of Credentials Committee (continued)

Referring to document CRED. C.4.1 "Report of the Credentials Committee", the Chairman of the Committee informed participants that Austria, Senegal and Venezuela should be added to the list given under point 3 of document CRED. C.4.1, making a total of 45 Contracting Party delegations whose credentials had been reviewed and accepted by the Committee. Recalling the recommendation made by the Credentials Committee of the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, held at Groningen in 1984, the Chairman of the Credentials Committee noted that point 5 of document CRED. C.4.1 called for more detailed provisions on credentials to be provided in the Rules of Procedure for the next meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

The Chairman invited participants to comment on document CRED. C.4.1; there being no objections or other comments, the document was adopted by consensus.

Agenda item XVII: Adoption of Conference Report, Recommendations and Decisions

The Chairman requested participants to examine carefully the revised list of participants PART. C.4.1 (Rev.). The Conservation Coordinator emphasized the enormous importance of the Bureau having an accurate and up-to-date list of contacts if it was to carry out its duties effectively and efficiently. He referred to the information document concerning “Administrative Authorities Responsible for Implementing the Convention in each Party”, which would constitute the Bureau’s principal source of contact addresses and phone/fax/telex numbers. Significant savings could be made in staff time and communications costs if both the above-mentioned lists were checked thoroughly for errors and omissions before being put into daily use.

Plenary documents PLEN. C.4.4, PLEN. C.4.5 and PLEN. C.4.6

The Chairman then invited participants to review the draft summary report of the fourth plenary session, PLEN. C.4.4. Subject to the inclusion of editorial amendments requested by the delegations of Iceland and Switzerland, the document was adopted by consensus.

The Chairman invited comments on documents PLEN. C.4.5 and PLEN. C.4.6. There being no requests for amendments, both reports were adopted by consensus. At the Chairman’s request, participants indicated their consent for the Bureau to make further editorial corrections when preparing final versions of the reports of plenary sessions. It was agreed that, pursuant to past practice, the report for the present plenary session would be presented to the new Standing Committee for approval.

Document DOC. C.4.12 (Rev. 2) “Programme 1991-1993”

The Chairman then asked participants to consider DOC. C.4.12 (Rev. 2) which had been revised at an open meeting of the Conference Committee to incorporate points raised during the plenary session of 2 July. The delegation of the UK, as Chairman of the Standing Committee’s Programme Group, noted in particular that the preamble and operative part of the draft resolution - DOC. C.4.12 (Rev. 2), Annex - had been amended to incorporate references to the “chapeau” on partnership - DOC. C.4.12 (Rev. 2), Annex I, Attachment I, Addendum I.

The Chairman invited comments on DOC. C.4.12 (Rev. 2), taking each page in turn. There being no objections or other comments, the document was adopted by consensus.

Document DOC. C.4.13 (Rev. 2) “Financial and Budgetary Matters”

Turning to DOC. C.4.13 (Rev. 2), the Chairman asked the Secretary General to introduce amendments which had been made in the light of discussion during the plenary session of 2 July (document PLEN. C.4.4). The Secretary General drew attention to Attachment I, pointing out that some corrections had been made to the amounts stated in the budget and that a footnote had been added to emphasize the importance of voluntary contributions towards the Monitoring Procedure. Budget line 10 (Contingency Fund) had been reduced from SFr 40,000 per annum to SFr 30,000, in order that SFr 10,000 might be placed in the new Wetland Conservation Fund, budget line 11. As for the Monitoring Procedure, a footnote indicated that substantial voluntary contributions to the Fund were expected. The scale of contributions shown in Attachment 2 had

been corrected and updated to include countries which had become Contracting Parties during the course of the meeting. The overall budget had not been increased, so that in effect, there was a small reduction in each Party's annual contribution.

The delegation of Austria stated that, for constitutional reasons, the Austrian delegation was required to make a general reservation on financial matters. Austria had not yet accepted the Regina amendments, but hoped to do so by the end of 1990.

The delegation of Kenya remarked that it was mindful of the discussions which had taken place on the subject of the Wetland Conservation Fund and of the difficulties the establishment of this fund caused to some delegations which had strict instructions on financial questions. However, Kenya wished to remind participants of the report from the African countries' informal regional consultations, which had emphasized the value and importance of establishing a Wetland Conservation Fund. Recalling that WWF had pledged SFr 20,000 for the fund if at least SFr 20,000 were provided by the Contracting Parties, and noting that the accession of new countries had slightly reduced the annual contributions for existing Parties, Kenya urged Contracting Parties to contribute an additional SFr 10,000 to the Wetland Conservation Fund, thus bringing it to SFr 20,000. Kenya acknowledged that this would mean an increase in annual contributions but felt that the increase would be acceptably small.

The delegation of the UK supported the concept of a Wetland Conservation Fund as originally proposed by WWF, and agreed with the delegation of Kenya that, irrespective of the possibility of any voluntary contributions, such a fund should be a designated line in the Convention's budget. The UK was concerned that the Fund should be operated strictly within the parameters laid down in the draft resolution RES. C.4.3 so that it did not become another development aid fund. The UK also considered that, in future, major new concepts and calls for new budget lines should be presented to the Standing Committee well in advance of meetings of the Conference. The UK delegation was nevertheless prepared to seek a voluntary contribution from the UK authorities, equivalent to the difference between the new contribution contained in DOC. C.4.13 (Rev. 2) and that which would have been payable if proposals (from the Nordic countries and others) for a budget line set at SFr 100,000 of "new money" had been accepted.

The delegation of Jordan stated its support for the Wetland Conservation Fund and for the proposal made by the delegation of Kenya.

The delegation of Japan pledged full support for the proposed Wetland Conservation Fund, provided that the Fund was to be managed, as noted in draft resolution RES. C.4.3 under the Terms of Reference for the Financial Administration of the Convention with the approval of the Standing Committee.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany supported the concept of a Wetland Conservation Fund and agreed with the terms of reference set out in draft resolution RES. C.4.3 (Rev.). The Fund would need as much money as possible in order to promote wetland conservation in developing countries; SFr 10,000 was clearly inadequate and it was to be hoped that substantial voluntary contributions would indeed be made. However, the delegation was not authorized to sanction an increase in budget, only to support the concept of a fund and to express the hope that voluntary contributions would be made.

The delegation of Denmark suggested that there was a clear majority of delegations in favour of increasing the budget by about 1%, as proposed by the delegation of Kenya. Denmark therefore considered that the proposal could be approved by consensus and that delegations under instructions not to sanction budget increases would be able to register reservations afterwards.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany appreciated all efforts to reach a successful conclusion but could not agree with the proposal made by the Danish delegation as an acceptable way forward.

The Chairman reminded participants that failure to reach an agreement by consensus would require the operation of a formal ballot.

The delegation of Kenya stated that in view of the difficulties its proposal caused, and bearing in mind that Kenya did not wish to see the meeting become bogged down, the proposal for an increase of the budget line from SFr 10,000 to SFr 20,000 was withdrawn. The Chairman thanked the delegation of Kenya for its comprehension.

The delegation of the USA stated its belief that the Contracting Parties had responded as well as possible to the proposal for a Wetland Conservation Fund, given that the proposal had not been prepared well in advance. The USA hoped that WWF would support the fund, even though it had been established with a small amount of core budget funding.

The delegation of Norway, on behalf of the Nordic countries, noted that they had been prepared to accept a 10% budget increase in order to establish the Wetland Conservation Fund, but realized that an increase of this scale was unacceptable for many other Contracting Parties. The Nordic countries would therefore consider the possibility of making voluntary contributions to the Fund.

The delegation of the Netherlands emphasized the very great importance which the Dutch government attached to the successful establishment of the Wetland Conservation Fund, and announced that the Netherlands was considering making voluntary annual contributions of SFr 10,000 to the Fund from 1991 to 1993.

The observer from WWF expressed disappointment that the Wetland Conservation Fund would not receive more substantial core funding. However, WWF agreed with the intervention which had just been made by the delegation of the USA and was eager to see the Fund work. It was essential to encourage substantial voluntary contributions and WWF would contribute SFr 20,000 as soon as a matching amount had been received in voluntary contributions from Contracting Parties. WWF indicated its hope that a Wetland Conservation Fund budget line of SFr 1,000,000 would be approved by the next meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in 1993.

The delegation of Switzerland recalled that the Swiss government had been making an annual contribution of SFr 100,000 to the Convention. In the future, this voluntary contribution could be paid, in its entirety, into the Wetland Conservation Fund.

Referring to Attachment 2 of DOC. C.4.13 (Rev. 2), the delegation of Venezuela noted that Venezuela had been omitted from the scale of contributions. Noting that Vietnam had also been

omitted accidentally from the revised version of Attachment 2, the Secretary General assured participants that the Bureau would amend the errors. At the Chairman's request, the meeting indicated its approval for the Bureau to carry out the necessary amendments.

There being no further comments or questions, DOC. C.4.13 (Rev. 2) was adopted by consensus.

Document DOC. C.4.14 (Rev. 2) "Standing Committee Matters"

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary General introduced the amendments which had been made to document DOC. C.4.14 (Rev. 2) in the light of discussion in plenary session on 2 July. There was increased emphasis on regional activities; provision had been made for alternate regional representation in the Standing Committee; and a footnote had been added to clarify the term "geographical distribution" on page 2 (English version) of the Annex.

The delegation of Chile stated that it had been the consensus of informal meetings of "Southern American" countries that the name of the region should be changed to "Neotropical".

There being no other interventions, document DOC. C.4.14 (Rev. 2) was adopted by consensus, subject to inclusion of the amendment requested by the delegation of Chile.

Document DOC. C.4.15 (Rev. 2) "Secretariat Matters"

At the Chairman's request, the Secretary General reminded participants that discussion in plenary session on 2 July had not required any amendments to document DOC. C.4.15 (Rev. 2) and that the representatives of IUCN and IWRB had indicated in plenary session their approval of the Memorandum of Understanding.

No comments or questions were forthcoming from the floor and document DOC. C.4.15 (Rev. 2) was therefore adopted by consensus.

The Director of IWRB welcomed the new Secretariat arrangements and stressed that IWRB looked forward with pleasure to continuing close links with the Bureau. However, he noted that the forthcoming changes would have personal implications for two of the Bureau's permanent staff currently based at Slimbridge, namely Michael Smart and Christine Samuel, to whom he extended a vote of thanks which was warmly endorsed by the meeting.

Conference Resolutions

The Chairman then directed participants towards consideration of draft resolutions RES. C.4.1 (Rev.) to RES. C.4.5, recalling that four additional resolutions on Programme, Financial Matters, Standing Committee and Secretariat Matters had already been adopted as integral parts of the documentation on administrative matters.

The delegation of Hungary referred to point c) of RES. C.4.3 (Rev.) "Resolution on a Wetland Conservation Fund" and requested clarification of the term "developing country", noting that, while not wishing to restrict funding available to other developing countries, Hungary would hope to benefit from the Fund and requested the Standing Committee to consider the matter. Agreement to this request was noted by the Chairman.

There being no further comments or questions, draft resolutions RES. C.4.1 (Rev.) “Resolution on the Interpretation of Article 10 bis paragraph 6 of the Convention”, RES. C.4.2 (Rev.) “Resolution on the Working Languages of the Conference of the Contracting Parties”, RES. C.4.3 (Rev.) “Resolution on a Wetland Conservation Fund”, RES. C.4.4 (Rev.) “Resolution on the Implementation of Article 5 of the Convention” and RES. C.4.5 “Resolution on Accession Requirements” were adopted by consensus.

Conference Recommendations

The Chairman invited participants to consider approval of the draft recommendations REC. C.4.3 (Rev.) to REC. C.4.16. He noted that REC. C.4.9.5 “Greek Ramsar Sites” had been drafted since the plenary session of 2 July and was therefore being placed before participants for the first time. This would entail references to Greece in REC. C.4.9.

There were no comments or questions from the floor relating to the following six draft recommendations:

- REC. C.4.3 (Rev.) - “National Reports”
- REC. C.4.4 (Rev.) - “Establishment of Wetland Reserves”
- REC. C.4.5 (Rev.) - “Education and Training”
- REC. C.4.6 (Rev.) - “Establishment of National Scientific Inventories of Potential Ramsar Sites”
- REC. C.4.7 (Rev.) - “Mechanisms for Improved Application of the Ramsar Convention”
- REC. C.4.8 (Rev.) - “Change in Ecological Character of Ramsar Sites”

Referring to REC. C.4.9 (Rev.) “Ramsar Sites in the Territories of Specific Contracting Parties”, the delegate of New Zealand, in her capacity as Chairperson of Workshop D on Listed Sites, suggested inserting the following paragraph between the fourth and fifth paragraphs of the operative part of the draft recommendation:

“RECOMMENDS the Government of Hungary to consider giving year-round Ramsar status to Lake Balaton and Lake Tata as sites included in the List of wetlands of international importance;”

The delegation of Hungary emphasized the responsibility which Hungary felt for the part-time designated sites and welcomed the proposed amendment, which would be helpful in discussions with the appropriate authorities and partner organizations.

Referring to the first line of point 2 in REC. C.4.9.1 (Rev.) “Doñana National Park, Spain”, the observer from WWF suggested the replacement of the word “advisory” with the words “formal consultative”. This proposal was endorsed by the delegation of Spain.

There were no comments from the floor relating to REC. C.4.9.2 (Rev.) “Everglades U.S.A.”, REC. C.4.9.3 (Rev.) “Azraq Oasis, Jordan”, or REC. C.4.9.4 (Rev.) “Conservation of the Leybucht, Federal Republic of Germany”.

The observer from WWF suggested that the first and second paragraphs of the operational part of REC. C.4.9.5 (Rev.) should be moved to the preamble and that the following paragraphs should be added to the recommendation:

“REQUESTS the Greek authorities to take action to quickly complete the legal zoning of all 11 Greek sites;”

“URGES Greece to take swift action to remedy ecological change... and to prevent further degradation of Greek Ramsar Sites;”

The delegation of Greece considered that the amendments proposed by the observer from WWF should not be included. No other delegation supported the proposals of WWF, so these were not brought forward. In addition, the delegation of Greece requested that the first paragraph of the operative part of REC. C.4.9.5 be amended to read:

“NOTES that the Greek authorities have, since the Regina Conference, provided the Ramsar Bureau with provisional maps showing the boundaries of Greek Ramsar sites, and are soon to provide definitive maps for the sites of Amvrakikos Gulf and Mikra Prespa National Park;”

The delegation of Greece also requested that the final paragraph of REC. C.4.9.5 be amended to read:

“REQUESTS the Greek authorities to take action to delimit precisely the boundaries of nine out of the eleven Greek Ramsar sites and to take, as far as possible, appropriate measures to ensure the conservation and wise use of all eleven sites.”

There were no comments or questions from the floor in connection with recommendations REC. C.4.10 (Rev.) “Guidelines for the Implementation of the Wise Use Concept”, REC. C.4.11 (Rev.) “Cooperation with International Organizations”, or REC. C.4.12 (Rev.) “Cooperation between Contracting Parties for the Management of Migratory Species”.

Referring to REC. C.4.13 (Rev.) “Responsibility of Multilateral Development Banks towards Wetlands”, the observer from WWF applauded the action taken by the US government which was mentioned in the last preambular paragraph; he suggested that the last operative paragraph be amended so that, as in the original draft, all countries were encouraged to follow the US example by opposing certain projects. However, following an intervention from the delegation of the UK, which felt that reference to “opposition” was inappropriate, this proposed amendment was not supported by the Contracting Parties.

Referring to REC. C.4.14 (Rev.) (renumbered REC. C.4.1) “Wetland Restoration”, the observer from WWF suggested that the following should be inserted after the third line of the operative text:

“the Agency or Agencies responsible for wetlands in each

Contracting Party should have wetland restoration in their mission;”

This proposal was supported by the delegations of the UK, Ireland and Senegal, which, in response to an intervention from the delegation of Italy, emphasized the importance of recognizing that there were often several different governmental agencies involved with wetland conservation.

Referring to REC. C.4.16 (renumbered REC. C.4.14) “Thanks to the Host”, the Secretary General indicated that this recommendation had not been included in the original package considered on 2 July, but that the Secretariat had drafted this document to thank the Swiss authorities for their extremely generous support to the Conference and drew particular attention to the welcome listing of six new Ramsar Sites in Switzerland. The delegation of Sweden pointed out that the wording of the final paragraph required a small amendment to make it clear that the words “these sites” referred to the newly designated Swiss Ramsar Sites. Acceptance of the draft recommendation was proposed by the delegation of South Africa.

The Chairman invited further comments on any of the draft recommendations. There being no further interventions from the floor, all of the documents REC. C.4.3 (Rev.) to REC. C.4.16 (renumbered C.4.1 to C.4.14) were adopted by consensus, subject to inclusion of the amendments noted above and to editorial corrections which the Bureau had been authorized to make.

The delegation of Switzerland wished to thank participants for supporting REC. C.4.16 (renumbered REC. C.4.14); it had been an honour and a pleasure for Switzerland to host the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Agenda item XVIII: Election of Members of Standing Committee

Prior to conducting the election, the Chairman gave the floor to the delegation of Chile which wished to report on progress made during informal meetings of countries in the “Southern American” region, as it had hitherto been named.

The delegation of Chile noted that the countries representing the newly renamed Neotropical Region had established a twelve-point outline programme for the triennium 1991-1993:

- “1. Establish a regional coordinating system for wetland conservation and communication maintenance.
2. Encourage the creation of a local Wetland Office, with a local national specialist officer, which should be supported by several institutions through foreign aid, and be able to advise on implementation of the Convention as well as conservation activities for regional wetlands.
3. Attract further Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention.
4. Promote general public awareness and environmental education programmes on wetlands.

5. Increase the designation of wetlands (nature reserves), according to national policies, and implement planning and conservation of listed sites (Monitoring Procedure). Apply the programme based on priorities for attention 1991-1993. Pilot areas should be recommended in each country.
6. Implement administrative national infrastructure for wetland conservation initiatives, monitoring, wise use, and research.
7. Apply the wise use concept and inventory of resource use within national wetlands by obtaining funds via projects presented to development agencies through the Ramsar Bureau.
8. Encourage multidisciplinary research and meetings of a technical and scientific nature, with financial assistance through the Ramsar Bureau or from bilateral or multilateral agreements.
9. Stimulate the establishment of shared wetland systems and improve participation in the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network and establish coordinated research on key species, like the black-necked swan in the southern cone of South America.
10. Promote technical and scientific training with fellowship assistance for local personnel.
11. Review, update and implement the Neotropical Wetlands Inventory in view of the new framework objectives.
12. Support the work of the Convention by contributing with local experience and technical advice, when appropriate, in order to promote and develop wetland conservation, as well as advise new interested parties in the region to become members of the Convention.”

The delegation of Chile concluded by noting that Chile had led Southern American participation in the Convention for some years and that it was now time for a change in Standing Committee representation. The informal regional meetings had determined that Venezuela should be the new representative of the Neotropical Region, with Uruguay as the alternate representative.

The delegation of Suriname supported these statements and extended personal thanks to Dr R. Schlatter of the delegation of Chile for his distinguished work.

The Chairman thanked the delegation of Chile and formally invited nominations for membership of the new Standing Committee. The following nominations were made (alphabetically by region):

Proposed Regional Representative Proposer Second

Africa: Tunisia Mauritania Senegal

Asia: Pakistan Japan Sri Lanka

Eastern Europe: Poland USSR German
Democratic
Republic

Neotropics: Venezuela Chile Guatemala

North America: USA Canada New Zealand

Oceania: Australia New Zealand USA

Western Europe: Netherlands Greece Norway

Having determined that there were no further nominations, the Chairman opened nominations for the positions of alternate Regional Representatives on the Standing Committee. The following nominations were made (alphabetically by region):

Proposed Alternate Representative Proposer Second

Africa: Kenya Mauritania Guinea-Bissau

Asia: Iran Sri Lanka Japan

Eastern Europe: Hungary Poland Czechoslovakia
Neotropics: Uruguay Venezuela Bolivia

North America: Canada USA UK

Oceania: New Zealand Australia Netherlands

Western Europe: Spain UK Italy

The Chairman asked participants to indicate their acceptance of these nominations. There being no objections, the nominees for Regional Representatives and alternate Regional Representatives in the Standing Committee were duly elected by consensus. The Chairman announced that the new Standing Committee would meet shortly after the closure of the Conference.

Agenda item XIX: Next Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties

The Chairman invited proposals for the venue and date of the next meeting of the Conference.

The delegation of Japan considered it an honour to address the meeting and thanked the Chairman for his excellent work. The delegation was pleased to announce that the Government of Japan had decided on 22 June 1990 to invite the Conference of the Contracting Parties to hold its next meeting in Japan in 1993. Japan hoped very much that this proposal would be supported;

the actual place and date for the meeting would be determined by consultation between the Japanese authorities and the Convention Standing Committee and Bureau. However, like the cities of Regina and Montreux, the City of Kushiro in Hokkaido was an excellent example of a city close to an outstanding wetland. The Japanese people were strongly in favour of wetland conservation and environmental education and the rapid increase in public awareness of conservation matters had led to the present invitation and to a similar invitation to the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which would be meeting in Japan in spring 1992. Japan had entered into bilateral migratory bird conservation agreements with USA, USSR, Australia and China and the Japanese Foreign Minister had expressed strong support for conservation during the 44th Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. Japan was developing cooperative programmes on wetlands with other countries of Southeast Asia, as recommended at the previous meeting, and a meeting of the Conference in Japan would encourage such projects.

The Chairman thanked the delegation of Japan for a most generous proposal and invited comments from the delegates.

The Chairman of the Standing Committee, from the delegation of Pakistan, warmly welcomed the proposal, noting that the Convention currently had only 8 Contracting Parties and 46 listed sites in Asia. This unsatisfactory situation could be improved greatly by holding the next meeting of the Conference in Japan, a country which clearly wished to promote the Convention and which would make an excellent host.

The delegation of Guinea-Bissau strongly supported the proposal from the delegation of Japan and led participants in accepting the invitation by acclamation.

The delegation of Japan thanked participants for their strong support and suggested that, subject to discussion by the Standing Committee, initial ideas for a venue and date for the Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties were the City of Kushiro in early summer 1993. He requested that the Mayor of Kushiro be allowed to address the Conference.

The Mayor of Kushiro considered it a great honour that the city had been selected as the candidate venue for the 1993 Meeting of the Conference. He described the vast and beautiful reserve of Kushiro Shitsugen, paying particular attention to the wetland's population of Japanese Cranes. The people of Kushiro recognized that the most important matter was to promote the Ramsar Convention in Asia.

The Mayor's speech was greeted with acclamation by the meeting. The Chairman echoed this sign of appreciation and assured the delegation of Japan and representatives of the City of Kushiro that the Convention looked forward to the closest possible collaboration in the planning of the Fifth Meeting of the Conference.

Agenda item XX: Any Other Business

The Chairman invited participants to put forward items for discussion.

The delegation of New Zealand welcomed the offer from the delegation of Japan to host the next Meeting of the Conference and emphasized, on behalf of the island countries of Oceania and

Asia, that much greater attention should be given in future to mangrove, coral reef and coastal wetland ecosystems. New Zealand called upon the new Standing Committee to investigate how this might be achieved, with particular reference to the 1993 Meeting of the Conference in Japan.

The Chairman assured the delegation of New Zealand that the Standing Committee would consider the matter extremely carefully.

Agenda item XXI: Closure of the Meeting

The Chairman passed the floor to the Vice-Chairmen. Mr Clarke recalled recommendation REC. C.4.16 and renewed the thanks of all participants to the Swiss host authorities, a sentiment which the meeting endorsed by acclamation.

Mr Rao recorded his thanks to the Swiss Confederation, Canton of Vaud and Town of Montreux, to the Secretary General and Bureau staff, to the Standing Committee which had acted as the Conference Steering Committee, to the interpreters, and to the Chairman and Workshop Chairpersons.

The delegation of Denmark reminded participants that the extremely painstaking and difficult work undertaken by the Credentials Committee should not not be forgotten; a point which was warmly endorsed by the meeting.

On behalf of the Bureau, the Secretary General expressed pleasure that the largest meeting of the Conference to date had run so smoothly and amidst such a strong spirit of cooperation. He thanked most warmly the Swiss authorities, the Chairman, the Vice-Chairmen, the Workshop Chairpersons and the Secretariat team; with special thanks to IUCN, IWRB and LSPN, and the many volunteer helpers, the interpreters, the Bureau's legal consultant, and Bureau staff.

On behalf of all the NGOs present, the observer from WWF thanked the Chairman and all participants, emphasizing that NGOs wished to work with governments and looked forward to even greater cooperative efforts in the future.

The Chairman paid tribute to the work undertaken by the temporarily expanded Secretariat which had worked hard to secure the success of the meeting, which had been only a short straight down a long, hard road towards the prevention of wetland destruction and the promotion of conservation and wise use. In three years time the Conference would meet in the Far East, but there was much work to be undertaken in the meantime to make the Convention even more effective and efficient. The Chairman encouraged the ninety countries represented at Montreux to increase regional activities and urged all the observer states present to join the Convention as quickly as possible. He also encouraged existing Contracting Parties to cooperate as widely as possible with NGOs. He noted that during the sixth plenary session, it had been proposed that the name of the Convention be changed to delete the phrase "especially as Waterfowl Habitat". Such a proposal, which emphasized that all elements within a wetland were important, could not be considered lightly towards the close of the present meeting, but should be considered carefully by the new Standing Committee. Looking forward to the further maturing of the Ramsar Convention, the Chairman declared the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties closed (see Annex).

